THE ENGLISH SCENE

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The Times

CLAYTON MILL
ON THE SOUTH DOWNS

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THE ENGLISH SCENE

THE SPIRIT OF ENGLAND IN THE MONUMENTS OF HER SOCIAL LIFE AND INDUSTRIAL HISTORY

Special articles from "The Times," with additional chapters by the same author

WITH 31 ILLUSTRATIONS IN PHOTOGRAVURE

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CHAPTER I

THE ENGLISH SCENE

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THE ENGLISH SCENE

One part of the beauty of the English scene is in the natural landscape, the other is in the things that have been set upon it. Not all that has been built is beautiful; too often, indeed, the scene is marred by structures unshapely and ill-sited. But while the landscape suffers violence here and there at the hands of architects who are not artists, and of builders who are neither, many things that Englishmen in the past have introduced into the scene are pleasing to the eye and inspiring to the mind. Some of the most charming are of humble origin, constructed simply and to serve a simple but necessary purpose, like the grinding of corn or the brewing of beer. They are as characteristic of the soil as the people who have lived and toiled upon it, and at last have been buried in it. The contribution they make to the landscape is to be accepted as readily as that of a tree or a hill, as we realise when we see the oast-houses dividing the orchards of Kent, the windmills overlooking the downs of Sussex. These simple monuments memorialise aspects of our national story. What if they have outlived their day and generation? They have enriched the land as

they enrich the landscape yet, blending in form and tone with the pattern and colour of the scene so exquisitely that to uproot them is to make a gap no modern substitute can adequately fill. Time has wrapped about them a mantle of beauty ; and in our day of shocks and convulsions they typify that unfeverish, but not uneager, way of life that men once had, and might have yet again if they would be content to mark the time by sundials and not by stop-watches. Round them we may reconstruct the past ; and, looking here at the cold hop-oven, there at the motionless sails, recreate in our minds the busy scene of another age in hop-garden and oast-house, see the deliberate miller sensing a puff of welcome wind. True, the old machines and the old methods are not wholly gone, but the few remaining wheels creak sadly where yet men work with them ; and the ruthless fingers of mechanical progress grope further and further afield from our industrial centres to destroy and to supplant.

But while time's processes and our own restlessness whittle down our inheritance from the past, which is scattered over the English scene, it is well that we examine and enjoy what is left of our legacy. We shall find great profit in it. Tithe barn, watermill, packhorse bridge, even the sinister pillory, devised and handled by our forefathers, are stamped with their veritable impress, and bear the hall-mark of authentic biography. And these things that were made to serve our earlier kinsfolk in the routine of their daily lives were built with little intent

but that of making something useful that should worthily serve its purpose, as a man bent on some urgent object is not at pains to draw attention to himself in obtaining it. No fretted façade impairs the austere beauty of the lines of the watermill; no monstrous iron casting of beast or flower disfigures the stark uprightness of the lock gate. How could the landscape have taken them with such excrescences to its heart?

Cathedrals were built to the glory of God and palaces for the pleasure of kings and cardinals. In the actual building of them there was virtue and reward. Reared in beauty, they dominated and still dominate the scene in which they were set, exquisite and self-secure in their sheer being, distinct from the office of housing a congregation or a monarch or a prelate. But minor buildings, concerned intimately with things and processes in the workaday world of obscure folk, gathered character from and likeness to the soil that sustained them, so that they appear to be a natural part of it, almost, indeed, to have grown and not to have been built with hands. Moreover, because of their very nearness to the men and women, nourished in our own shires, who made them; because they were handled, seen and used by them in habitual intimacy, we may well be moved to survey them with feelings almost of reverence and wonder. Such an emotion may they awaken as that inspired by relics of a near kinsman, some simple objects had in daily use by him and about which, though the hand that once instinctively sought them is long dead, there ever clings,

as if defying death, a savour of the vanished owner's personality.

The curators of our museums have done well in preserving for us much of our legacy in smaller things. Furniture, utensils, raiment, and so forth, are to be seen in a hundred places about the country ; but it is unfortunate, as every curator will admit, that miscellaneous objects heaped together lose much of their interest and individual character. " We have not room enough " was ever the cry of the exhibitor. Moreover, English people, except those of them who are students, when they have leisure generally like to be out of doors. " This," remarked an attendant at South Kensington, contemplating the empty galleries on a hot Bank Holiday, " is not a fine weather show." It would be difficult to compose in so few words a more cogent argument in support of the project to establish an open-air museum. But we are not concerned to be controversial ; and those who believe that the proper study of mankind is man may well believe also that the proper place to study the handiwork of Englishmen is where they made and left it. The eye is wearied by a mass. In the best arranged collection the individual object can only with difficulty be detached by the observer from the multitude. Therefore it is for those who would count themselves legatees of " the rude forefathers of the hamlet " to seek out such things as these pages discuss and survey them in the scene and on the soil to which they belong. Only if the spectator will do

that can they deliver the whole of their message. Only then can they convincingly paint in his mind pictures of the vanished England Napoleon coveted and Shakespeare sang.

It is admitted that circumstances will often be against the spectator, that " the bliss of solitude " will more than once be shattered by the heralds of progress. If it is a watermill that holds his attention and fancy paints for him the lazy river divided before a string of corn-laden barges, soon to discharge their cargo to the miller, he will need to keep his ears fast shut against the thudding of the engine of the passing motor-boat. Or perhaps a dilapidated toll-house, long tenantless, its gate vanished, its very windows boarded up as if to emphasise the absence of life within, will catch his fancy. Then only the most rigorous concentration of mind will fling back the assault of the passing charabanc, swift and uproarious in its career on the very road where, in delighted retrospect, he sees the laden packhorses halt to snatch, at the wayside, a mouthful of cool grass, while the teamster pays the reckoning at the gate. Life, as they say, went very well then, before the mechanical age, or well enough. Time mattered less ; the hour rather than the minute was the unit by which it was counted. But we must not wholly forget that the life men thought well enough was harsh as we measure comfort, crude as we define decency. There are chapters in English history that jar upon the idealistic contemplation of an age of slow processes and simple pastimes. There was more

than one skeleton in the cupboard of Merrie England, though

> "Time, so complained of
> Who to no one man
> Shows partiality,
> Brings round to all men
> Some undimm'd hours."

A man who was like to be hanged for sheep-stealing was not likely to be killed because he failed to walk on the left side of the road. And yet if traffic did not shatter the ears with its fanfare of motor horns, and shake the foundations of churches and houses with its weight and speed, the thunder of hooves and iron-bound wheels on cobblestones was no more easily to be endured than the showers of mud flung up from every miry pot-hole by the pounding feet of the horses. The windmill sails went slow or fast with the caprice of the breeze, and the mail coach stuck in snow-drifts. A dishonest tradesman was released half-dead from the pillory. But botulism did not lurk in tins. Travellers were not flung to death from the sky. If we are to see the pageant of the years faithfully we must see it whole. Those who took the stage before us we may envy for much, and not least because, in contemplating old methods, old machines and old processes, we realise that, if they had not more spare time than ourselves, they had more time to spare.

And how will future generations regard our contribution to the English scene? There is no virtue in sheer age alone. What is significant is form and fitness; the

impress of themselves that men leave upon their work. Will there be an outcry when the last petrol station is threatened with demolition? Will pilgrimages be made to a ruined margarine factory? Will enamelled iron advertisements be cherished in museums? One would think not, for all these things lack the individual and the humanising touch. The imprint of the craftsman's tools is upon none of them. They could be constructed as easily in hundreds as in dozens. They might as reasonably be French or German as English. If they stood for a thousand years they would look as they look now, alien to the soil, harsh and incongruous, characterless relics of mechanical processes. But, accepting as we must the inevitable law of change, we may still comfort ourselves with the reflection that what irks us of man's making in the landscape to-day can endure only for a season, and that as men have built beautifully once they may again so build, devising with their hands things not unworthy to memorialise the ingenuity of enlightened minds. And in any case we cannot know what, among the things that we shall leave them, our successors will think worthy to be preserved.

CHAPTER II

WINDMILLS

CHAPTER II

WINDMILLS

England is growing every day more careful of her ancient monuments and more zealous in preserving unspoiled the beauty of her countryside. For that we may be thankful, even if the education of public opinion in such matters is still far from complete. Her history, in part, is recorded in both. But while buildings, intimately connected through the centuries with her religious, political, civic, and artistic life, and hills and moorlands, displaying with advantage her rural characteristics, are from time to time made safe against decay and abuse, so that they may be enjoyed by posterity, certain objects, essentially utilitarian but historically important, are generally less favoured. Such objects record the economic side of her history and mark, in the simple process of becoming out of date, her industrial progress. Having ceased usefully to serve the purpose for which they were made, they collapse through neglect or suffer violence at the hands of progress and are scrapped. In any case they are generally doomed to disappear, be it sooner or later, and thereby serious gaps are made in the narrative of how and where our forebears worked and went about their business.

A case in point is that of the windmill. As the correspondence columns of *The Times* have shown, the windmill is rapidly disappearing from the English landscape, and the feeling is widespread that something should be done to save it from complete extinction. The austere may contend that it is foolish to become sentimental about a piece of machinery; but the windmill is something more than a piece of machinery. It is the symbol of an age, a milestone in time, and, of all things that are built and do not grow, the one that custom and purpose have made most closely akin to the soil. Communities gathered about it, and from it streamed out the means of life.

The people of Sussex, in proper pride of county, have been in the forefront of the movement, now rapidly gathering weight, to preserve at least some of the windmills of England; and now the Society for the Pr[illegible]tion of Ancient Buildings is actively concerned in t[illegible] matter. But if the windmill has reached that unhappy stage when its place in the landscape is no long[illegible] its place in literature and art is sure enough. Pen and brush bear witness over and again to the dom[illegible] [illegible]and figurative, of the whirlin[illegible]ils[illegible] [illegible]. Our common speech is illu[illegible]inated by metaph[illegible] [illegible]oo many to count that have sprung [illegible]om mills of vario[illegible] sorts, and the miller himself remains, for all the c[illegible]nly of the scenes, a perm[illegible]nent and promin[illegible] [illegible] national stage. Even now, w[illegible] [illegible] mechanisation has invaded the nursery, [illegible] [illegible]awker of toys still finds it

worth his while to fashion from scraps of coloured paper a set of windmill sails and pin them to a stick where they will spin merrily enough for a child's delight.

The balance of opinion among authorities suggests that windmills were brought to Northern Europe by the Crusaders, who had seen them used in the Near East, not for grinding corn, but for pumping up water in places where it was and is all too scarce. And although a great number of windmills are mentioned in the Domesday Book these, too, it is stated, were in almost every case pumping engines. But the windmill was in use for the purpose with which it is most generally associated probably in the tenth century and definitely very soon after. One of the earliest representations of such a windmill is in a Flemish brass of Adam de Walsokne in St. Margaret's, Lynn Regis, who died in 1349. It shows the post type of mill in its most primitive form. There is also a window in Great Greenford Church where a mill of the fifteenth century is depicted. Shakespeare, in the first part of *King Henry the Fourth*, refers to a windmill in St. George's Fields (London). There is a representation of a windmill in the Luttrell Psalter and an old ballad [illegible] the fact that Richard, Earl of C[illegible] took refuge in a windmill after the battle of Lewes in 1264; while one of the earliest in England was demolished by order of Samson, Abbot of Bury St. Edmunds, [illegible] chronicle of 1191. An ingenious Dutchman invented a [illegible] saw-mill in 1633, and one was erected and used near the [illegible]. But of course there

were scores of windmills in and about London at one time, as charts, maps, hotel-signs and street-names testify. The remains of one or two within the suburban fringe are still to be seen.

Some notable windmills about the country may usefully be mentioned, and reference made to others that have been restored and will be preserved. At Torksey, near Lincoln, there is a windmill of the post type in working order in which locally grown grain is ground. It is reported that it "has a very pronounced sway when working." Another post mill at Ditchling is in the keeping of the Sussex Archæological Trust, who use it in most appropriate fashion as a museum for old agricultural implements. Another windmill at Rottingdean, near by, has been bought by the parish for preservation. It is of the wooden smock variety. At Cley-next-the-Sea, in Norfolk, a mill in a ruined condition has been renovated and turned into a dwelling. There is a pair of mills at Outwood Common, in Surrey, of which one is reported to be not oversafe, and another very fine specimen is that at Rhosneigr. A picturesque mill of the smock type that is reported to be falling into decay and from which two of the sweeps have already fallen is at Uphill, near Folkestone ; while in Warwickshire there is Chesterton mill, designed by Inigo Jones, built on solid masonry in the form of a series of arches. The only tower mill in England having a wheel instead of sails to catch the wind is at Haverhill. It is reported to be in the market. The wheel is 50 feet in diameter and has

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The Times

HAVERHILL MILL, SUFFOLK

The Times

NEATISHEAD MILL

NEAR HORNING, NORFOLK

120 vanes, each 5 feet long and 1 foot wide. The old mill at Reigate has become a place of worship. The old post windmill on Mousehold Heath, Norfolk, has been in one family for over a century. This is a mill that was painted by Crome, and efforts are being made to preserve it. At Neatishead, also in Norfolk, there is a mill still working, though it has but two of its four sails. In calm weather a small steam engine is used to supply the power. In Lincolnshire, at Holbeach, there was many years ago a brick windmill of the tower type, having eight sails. Some fifty years ago one of these sails was blown off in a storm, and that which balanced it was removed. Later two more sails were also removed, so that the original eight were reduced to four, which in time were themselves taken away and the structure left sail-less. While many windmills that have ceased to be used as such have already been restored and used as dwellings, others, less happily, have been exploited for commercial purposes and their fine timbers or plaster walls defaced by glaring inscriptions. But enough has been said to show that there are many fine mills all over the country that are still not so far advanced in decay that they could not, with a comparatively small outlay, be preserved from further deterioration and maintained like other monuments of national interest.

The original windmill used for grinding corn was simply a mechanical type of the ancient quern. The mechanism of most of the windmills built in England consists of a ponderous wind-shaft carrying four or six

arms or whips on which the sails are mounted. The wind-shaft itself is placed at an angle of from 10 to 15 degrees with the horizontal, so that the sails in rotating may clear the lower part of the mill structure. The arms or whips may be as much as 40 feet long so that the tips describe a circle 80 feet in diameter. The sails are generally about 6 feet wide and rectangular in shape, covering five-sixths of the arms. They have been made both of sailcloth and of narrow boards. The internal machinery passing on the movement of the wind-shaft to the upper stone is of the simplest form and made in some cases almost wholly of wood.

The oldest type of windmill is the post type, in which the entire structure is carried on a single post of great strength and thereon rotated by a long pole when it is desired to bring the sails into the eye of the wind. This was succeeded by the tower, frock, or smock mill, in which the main structure is stationary and the sails and the wind-shaft are carried in a revolving cap. Refinements in the general design of the mechanism were introduced from time to time; thus in 1750 Andrew Meikle applied to the mill an auxiliary rotating fan set at right angle to the sails and maintaining them normal to the wind. In 1807 Sir W. Cubitt introduced an automatic reefing device. The thin boards just referred to with which some sails were furnished were held up to the wind by weights, and if the force of the wind exceeded a certain pitch the boards were forced back and the exposed surface reduced. Springs have been used for

the same purpose. The disk type is commonly seen in more modern water-pumps, but our principal concern here is with the corn-grinding mill.

The windmill, if it is the most obvious and picturesque of our ancient industrial monuments, is by no means the only one that claims our sympathetic interest and merits preservation. Water and tidal mills, which once had their important duty to the populations of towns and hamlets, are becoming few and hard to find. Ancient bridges that carried main roads over rivers and chasms are being supplanted by reinforced concrete structures, fashioned to endure against the growing flood of heavy road transport, and with them the old packhorse roads grow less easily identified. Something is being done to make use of our remaining canals, but there are civic rejoicings when a toll-gate is abolished, even though the antiquary may strive for the preservation of the house where the minder of the gate sat at the receipt of tolls. Round houses and pounds are losing, if they have not already lost, their place in the once common equipment of every decent town. Wells and pumps give way before the ever-lengthening pipe system which carries what is advertised as the " company's water supply " ; and our appreciation of the measurement of time is shown in wrist-watches and no longer in sundials.

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The Times

INTERIOR OF NEATISHEAD MILL

SHOWING THE CORN FED DOWN TO THE MILLSTONES

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The Times

ST. OSYTH TIDAL MILL
ESSEX

CHAPTER III

WATERMILLS

CHAPTER III

WATERMILLS

The place of the windmill in the English scene, and what is being done to preserve it, where here and there the cheerful sails are still raised above fen and meadow, we have already noted. The windmill's vital service was shared by the watermill, a much older contrivance; and it is not surprising that a country so well watered as ours should at one time have abounded in watermills. Abounded is indeed the word, for at the time in English history when the Lord High Admiral counted the supervision of such mills among his duties he was compelled to place some check on the activities of those who, in tampering with the natural flow of streams and rivers so that more power might bear on the mill wheels, created navigational difficulties. Whitehall is not now concerned with what happens on the Dee; at least not with the impounding of water, the making of sluices, and the grinding of corn; but there are still many watermills in the country, some of them still in use; and the survival of the watermill seems to be more robust than that of the windmill, though impartial time levels here one and there another as the years pass, working sometimes through the agency of the road surveyor, sometimes by methods less violent and abrupt.

Though they are closely related and are used for the same purposes, there is more difference between the watermill and the windmill than the differences between water and wind as sources of power. Darkness and mystery cover the creaking processes of the watermill; and even when it is day the pounding of the wheel and the gurgle and splash of the water are sounds sinister and daunting. At night the urgent stream which flashed gaily enough in the sunshine flows with a dark malignity. The toiling wheel gives out a grimmer sound, and the troubled water, beaten into foam, gleams ghostly white. But the windmill shows an open face to the world. Its sails are lifted to the clouds. Its aspect at night is still a friendly one, unless distortion lurks in the anxious eye of the beholder.

Two old watermills that are threatened are at St. Osyth, in Essex, and at Winchester. A mill is mentioned in the inventory of the property of St. Osyth Abbey, and though it is not the structure now under notice it was no doubt on the same site and, like this, a tidal mill. The present building may date from 1730, and its foundations are one with those of the bridge by which it stands. Some of the timbers are of much greater age than the main structure. It has a mansard roof and is pleasantly weather-boarded. The present two wheels of the mill are of wood, though an earlier pair were iron, and they are turned, as in other mills of this type, by using the ebb and flow of the tide in the creek over which the mill is built.

The mill at Winchester is above Soke Bridge, and, as was explained in a letter bearing representative signatures, and published in *The Times*, the building has long been disused and is in danger of falling into decay or collapsing entirely. A sum of £850 is being sought to complete the £1,300 required to make possible the preservation of this most interesting Winchester monument, the guardianship of which the National Trust has agreed to undertake if the necessary funds are secured.

Recently there was a controversy concerning the preservation of the King's Mill at Cambridge. At Houghton (Hunts) there is a watermill that must have been painted by artists as often as any other in the country. It is a square structure of three storeys, on the Ouse, standing on a base of red brick. Nearer London there is the watermill at Cobham, which is one of the type that has an exposed wheel. Though contrary reports have been circulated, it may be stated definitely that this mill is not to be demolished. Another good example of a mill of this sort is at Hadlow, in Kent. It dates from the eighteenth century, and has beside it a house of the same age as itself. The mill is still in use. The weather-boarding has been stripped from part of it and corrugated iron, painted white, has been substituted. A truly superb upstanding mill, also in commission, is on the Wey at Newark, at no great distance from the Priory, where excavations have recently been carried out, and to which it probably belonged—or rather, another mill on the same site. The present building is very large and finely

proportioned, and is one of the best examples of such a structure anywhere near London.

At Woodbridge there is a tidal mill, and there are also one or two in Cornwall. One also existed at Dover in the days of William the Conqueror. At Bosham there is another pleasant old watermill, and there are traces of Saxon work in the neighbourhood of it. It has been suggested that some use might be made of old windmills for the benefit of ex-Service men, and this makes it all the more interesting to recall that John Sclatter, who was crippled in the Battle of Wakefield (1460), received from a grateful King a pension from the proceeds of the water-mill at Lancaster.

Mr. James Dundas White has reminded us of the great antiquity of the watermill. It was used by both the Greeks and the Romans; and it has been put on record that the earliest known allusion to a watermill, the first power mill in the world, is in an epigram of Antipater of Thessalonica, who flourished in 85 B.C., the year in which the watermill is believed to have been invented. Mithridates, King of Pontus, who was defeated by Pompey in 65 B.C., possessed such a mill; and the machine is mentioned by various classical writers. The Greek mill is the earliest type. In this the wheel lay flat in the water, supported by a spike attached to its hub impinging on a convenient stone in the river bed. It revolved on an upright central shaft, so that in appearance it was very much like a large example of a child's teetotum. The shaft passed upward through a pair of stones, to the

upper one of which it was fixed. Slats were fixed to the face of the wheel, which was turned by the action of the water in thrusting against them. Thus, wheel, shaft, and upper stone all turned together. One can hardly imagine a simpler piece of mechanism, nor be surprised that very soon after it had been devised it was in use far and wide in ancient Europe.

In the northern part of the Continent various modifications were introduced, the mill wheel sometimes consisting merely of a number of fins rooted in the spindle or shaft. All these mills of early days were housed in small stone huts. In England and Scotland and elsewhere they were often left untended and seem to have been a sort of communal possession to which people took their small quantities of corn for grinding from time to time. The remains of many such are to be seen in Scotland. Twenty years before the birth of Christ Roman ingenuity improved the design of the watermill, and its mechanism was described by Vitruvius. No longer now did the wheel rotate on its side. It stood upright, and its rotary movement was transferred to the stones by a simple system of gearing in which the wheels were made of wood with deep square teeth cut in them. The floating mill had the advantage that it could be towed to that spot in the river where the current was strongest and there moored. Mills of this kind were romantically associated with the raising of the siege of Rome by the Goths in 536, and they are still used here and there in Central Europe. It is generally accepted that there is

no definite trace of a Roman mill in England, though Knot Mill, Manchester, was at one time supposed to have been of Roman origin, but even here only remnants of a supposed millrace were found. In the eighteenth century many improvements in the mechanism of watermills were made. The number of wheels and the number of stones were multiplied and satisfactory methods were devised of conveying the corn to the top of the mill, whence it was fed to the stones, so that much wearisome human labour was saved.

Anglo-Saxon charters and laws contain a few references to watermills and the Domesday Survey refers to thousands scattered about the country. There is still the so-called Saxon mill at Guy's Cliff, in Warwickshire; while at Pangbourne there is one of the oldest sites of a watermill in the country. Another ancient mill is at Cleeve, near Goring-on-Thames. It has become a private residence.

Watermills, playing their essential part in the lives of communities, were often as much a source of hardship as of benefit. The building of them, the use, the payment for having corn ground in them, were all subjects for many and variable laws and regulations. Owners of the soil not infrequently had it in their hands by neglecting to build a mill, or by failing to keep one in repair, to spread inconvenience among numbers of people; and while men might refuse for one reason or another to use the mill to which they were legally bound to take their corn, failure to support the appointed mill, assuming

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The Times

HOUGHTON WATERMILL

ON THE OUSE, HUNTINGDON

The Times

COBHAM WATERMILL
SURREY

it was in repair, might be a serious offence. In many places there were mills workable only in winter when there was sufficient water. Watermills were owned by the King and by religious houses, by burgesses, by private individuals, by communities and syndicates. They were farmed out. Water was greedily impounded for them, so that other users of the damaged stream suffered. Payment for the use of them was rigorously fixed, punishments for deceitful millers were drastic. Watermill legislation, indeed, is a story in itself.

Of watermills that have ceased to be used as such but still stand as inhabited houses something may here be said. Some such may be seen on the Whitewater in Hampshire, where they have become very pleasant country residences. That at Cleeve has been noted. It is no uncommon thing to find about such places the old worn-out stones that have been discarded in years gone by, and sometimes also the rough unfinished stones that were never taken into use and now never will be. In some cases the wheels and machinery are removed, or the river flow is diverted; but generally the charming external characteristics of the millhouse are retained; and that pair of words is a not infrequent part of addresses both in cities and country places.

CHAPTER IV

CANALS

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The Times

NEWARK WATERMILL
ON THE WEY, NEAR WOKING

The Times

ON THE GRAND JUNCTION CANAL
NEAR BOXMOOR

CHAPTER IV

CANALS

The quickest trains on the London to Liverpool route make the journey between the two cities in rather less than four hours; but in *The Times* of December 19, 1806, it was reported that "the first division of the troops that are to proceed by the Paddington Canal to Liverpool and thence by transports for Dublin will leave Paddington to-day, and will be followed by others to-morrow and Sunday. By this mode of conveyance the men will be only seven days in reaching Liverpool and with comparatively little fatigue, as it would take them above 14 days to march that distance. Relays of fresh horses for the canal boats have been ordered to be in readiness at all the stages."

But it was not so many years before that paragraph appeared that there had been a great and widespread outcry against canal building. The men who were thus transported by water from London to Liverpool must have thanked their stars that they were not ordered to march over such roads as were those of England in December a year after Trafalgar.

But the opposition to the canals had been led by the turnpike trustees—whose activities will be discussed in a

later article—who feared that the greater use of water for inland transport would attract so much traffic away from the miserable roads they controlled that the source of their gains would swiftly decline, if it did not altogether vanish. Their fears, moreover, were shared by others. The bulk of transported merchandise was carried at this time on packhorses, and the packhorse owners appear to have believed, or to have professed to have believed, that the time was short before their horses would be eating their heads off in stable and meadow instead of staggering beneath great loads of coal, salt, stone, and what not from one side of the country to the other. It did not take them long to inflame the minds of the farmers, who translated the feared decline of the packhorse into diminished sales of fodder; while the horse-breeder professed to foresee the extinction of the heavy draught horse. Other prophets of evil were concerned with the creation of noxious vapours, the spread of petty theft, the effect on old mines of the opening of new ones, and the danger of competition with the coastal trade.

So they argued, and the canal builders were effectively checked for a time. But only for a time, for dozens of canals had been opened by 1800, and a period of over-building followed. In the past few days we have seen that the canal question has been taken up anew, and that the Government favours canal development, but, as Mr. R. B. Dunwoody says, apart from company amalgamations in certain parts of the country and work done by the Nottingham Corporation on the Trent, "our water-

ways are in practically the same condition as they have been for the last 100 years."

The earliest canals made in England were of Roman workmanship. These were the Caer Dyke, forty miles long, which connected the Witham with Peterborough, and the Foss Dyke, ten and a half miles long, which connected the Trent at Torksey with the Witham at Lincoln. Only traces of the former may be seen to-day; but the latter is still navigable. From time to time in the twelfth and succeeding centuries river navigation was improved and canalisation was undertaken; but it was in the eighteenth century that the canal at last attained an assured position in the lives of the people and in the conduct of the country's business. The closing year of the seventeenth century saw the opening of the Aire and Calder Navigation, probably the most important work of the sort until then achieved, which quickly developed into an important means for the transport of coal and salt, and paid handsome dividends; and then rather less than 100 years before Queen Victoria came to the Throne, Brindley, in undertaking to construct the Duke of Bridgewater's Canal, opened the great era of canal construction in this country. Brindley himself lived to make 523 miles of canals, before the development of railways transferred hundreds of thousands of tons of water-borne freight to trucks and wagons. The Bridgewater Canal connected Manchester and Worsley. Brindley, who as we know was something of an oddity, and so ill versed in the use of the pen that he did his calculations in his head, received

£1 a week wages. But he built the canal which remains a monument to his genius—it has since passed into the hands of the Manchester Ship Canal Company—while a contemporary writer, quoted by Mr. J. S. Jeans, thus describes his activities in another direction :—

" Gentlemen come to see our eighth wonder of the world—the subterraneous navigation, which is cutting by the great Mr. Brindley, who handles rocks as easily as you would plum-pies, and makes the four elements subservient to his will. He is as plain a looking man as one of the boors of the Peake, or one of his own carters, but when he speaks all ears listen, and every mind is filled with wonder at the things he pronounces to be practicable. He has cut a mile through bogs which he binds up, embarking them with stones which he gets out of other parts of the navigation, besides about a quarter of a mile into the hill Yelden ; on the side of which he has a pump, which is worked by water, and a stove, the fire of which sucks through a pipe the damps that would annoy the men who are cutting towards the centre of the hill."

Canal construction from this point advanced, as we have seen, rapidly enough, and revolutionised internal transport. Those who feared to lose so much probably gained heavily in the end ; while appreciation of the improved means and speed of travel was general, as the paragraph from *The Times* in 1806, quoted above, reflects. The barges and boats of those days were hauled by horse or man power in most cases. Sometimes they were poled,

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Sydney Pitcher

SAPPERTON TUNNEL

NEAR CHALFORD, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

ON THE THAMES AND SEVERN CANAL

The Times

A LOCK-UP ON A BRIDGE

BRADFORD-ON-AVON, WILTSHIRE

or were rowed with one enormous oar, a second over the stern being used as a rudder. Through tunnels they were often driven by "legging," when the ship's company—if the phrase is not too ambitious—lay on their backs in their craft and pushed it forward by thrusting with their feet against the walls and roof of the tunnel. At least one modern writer has experienced this form of navigation, as Mr. Temple Thurston shows in "The Flower of Gloster." Latterly steam and even petrol have been used for power in barges, but the horse harnessed by a long rope to the barge, still emphasises the origin of the word "towing-path," a task in which he is still sometimes helped by his master.

Another remarkable achievement in canal building was the making of the Kennet and Avon, which enters Devizes 425 feet above sea level after passing through twenty-nine locks in two and a half miles. It gained great prosperity in transporting vast quantities of Bath stone and coal, but barges are not often seen on it to-day.

Canal systems linking up the great industrial centres of the North and the Midlands, and the latter and the West with London, are so numerous that to name them all would be tedious; but something more detailed may be said of canals that have ceased to serve a useful purpose and which remain with us as curiosities or as memorials of the transport systems of an earlier age.

A canal with a history that must surely be unique is the Royal Military Canal in Kent and Sussex between Hythe and Rye, which was constructed as part of the

defence scheme in which the martello towers thereabouts figured at a time when British eyes were ever turned towards the English Channel, searching for Napoleon's ships of war. A canal which was expanded into something to serve transport by water in another way from that for which it was intended was cut in the north bank of the Thames and was opened in 1805. This was the City Canal from Limehouse Reach to Blackwall Reach. The Government and the Corporation of the City of London found the £168,800 which the work cost. For the first three years following the opening no dues were charged; later they were imposed, but it failed to pay none the less. In 1829 it was bought by the West India Dock Company and became the South-West India Dock. In 1870 it was much enlarged and improved.

No such utilitarian destiny awaited the Basingstoke Canal, which was constructed in 1778, and much of whose length is to be found in the 250 miles of canals that have become derelict or have been converted into railways. Long stretches of this waterway are among the quietest and least-frequented places in the country. Rich vegetation abounds on its banks. In places the trees meet above it, forming in summer long tunnels in which the light is tinged a greenish shade, giving to him who may pass through them, in a boat hardly propelled through the weed-thick water, a ghostly and baleful air. Here and there a broken bridge crosses the water, here and there an empty boat-house stands mournfully on the bank. Those who know the canal best are, perhaps, the

young men who, in the years immediately following 1914, found it ever and again to be the line of demarcation between the forces of imaginary but contending states.

Recent years and new methods of engineering brought the Manchester Ship Canal with the removal and rebuilding of Brindley's aqueduct over the Mersey and Irwell Navigation and the construction of Barton Bridge, a great caisson which may be swung aside so that large vessels may pass along the Ship Canal. The Barton Bridge of Brindley's day was a simple stone structure of three arches, connecting two meadows between which the Irwell flowed. Little important work has been done on inland waterways since the Manchester Ship Canal was opened; but a recent official announcement concerning canal development is full of possibilities.

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CHAPTER V

POUNDS AND ROUND-HOUSES

CHAPTER V

POUNDS AND ROUND-HOUSES

On March 26th in the year before that of Queen Victoria's accession to the Throne *The Times* announced that on the 31st there would be published the first 1*s.* number of "The Posthumous Papers of the Pickwick Club, edited by Boz." The best Dickensian will probably deny that there is any one incident recorded in that work that he remembers better than any other; but he and other people will agree that the episode of Mr. Pickwick in the pound is one of the most humorous examples of anti-climax to be found in humorous literature, at least in the humorous literature of our own country. And it is to be noted that Dickens, throughout the narrative, never describes the pound itself. It was a common enough object in those days, however infrequently it may be seen a century later.

A pound, which is probably very like that in which Mr. Pickwick found himself when he woke up, with indistinct cries of "Sam," in the wheelbarrow, may be seen to-day no farther from London than Hampstead Heath. It is one of no great number here and there in the country that have been well preserved. In some cases the walls of pounds have been incorporated in those

of other and later structures, and a correspondent has recalled in *The Times* that near Rugby there is a pound which has been made part of a garden, a happier destiny than that which has overtaken many others. The pound at Hampstead is in the hollow over against Whitestone Pond. While, no doubt, Hampstead people recognise it for what it is, there must be many among the thousands who visit Hampstead who have failed to identify it. Its four walls are built of dark brick and the gate facing the roadway is stoutly made of timber and iron. At one time the supports of the gate were formed from the jaw-bones of a whale, but these, showing signs of decay, were removed some little while ago. In 1911 there were some railings beside the pound where there was a donkey stand, but these also have vanished. The year when the pound was built, 1787, is inscribed on the inside of the wall facing the gate. It took the place of another such enclosure for the removal of which a man was "presented" at the Manor Court. As recently as in 1888 a public pound was repaired at Madresfield, near Malvern.

Every parish or manor at one time had its pound into which straying cattle were driven and therein penned until such time as the damage they had done in their wanderings was paid for. It was an outstanding characteristic of agricultural England, stone or brick being the material of which generally it was built. The law allowed that whenever the cattle of a stranger or a neighbour trespassed on the land of another the owner of the

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The Times

THE POUND ON HAMPSTEAD HEATH

Dixon-Scott

A ROUND-HOUSE

CASTLE CARY, SOMERSET

land might seize them and detain them in the pound, or, as the word is, impound them, until the cost of the trespass was defrayed. A distinction was drawn between "pound overt" and "pound covert." In the former the owner of the offending beasts might go to the pound and there water and feed his cattle; indeed, it was his duty to do so; but not in the latter case. Later it became compulsory for the impounder to tend the cattle, a penalty being applicable in cases of default. Moreover, it was provided that if cattle impounded were not properly fed a stranger who provided for their needs might not only trespass in order to do so, but also could recover the costs from the owner of the cattle. At one time, also, distrained goods, if likely to be stolen or damaged, were deposited in pound covert. Other methods, however, are used to-day in the matter of the seizure of goods.

The official in charge of the pound was the pounder. Mr. F. Seebohm, in his book, "The English Village Community," tells us that he was an official with a recognised position who, while holding office, was freed from the ordinary services of his virgate or two bovates, but resumed them again when his term of office ceased, and another villein was elected in his stead. The name of the office occurs in the Boldon Book, the survey of the manors belonging to the Bishop of Durham in 1183.

A structure for the detention of men, as the pound was for the detention of animals, that survives here and there as a memorial of the earlier and cruder operation

of the law is the round-house, of which a very good example is to be seen at Heytesbury, in Wiltshire. This is a low, stone building having a heavy door furnished with a grille. There are others at Lingfield, Shrewton and Inglesham. The round-house has none of the antiquity of the pound; but this dismal lock-up, used more generally for the temporary detention of arrested persons than for their detention during a definite period, was an object common enough in the eighteenth century and later. Jack Sheppard was an adept in escaping from the round-house. An old print shows him emerging in the dead of night from one at Willesden, a timber one if memory serves; while it is also recorded that he rescued his mistress, Bess Lion, from the round-house at St. Giles, which at the time when Sheppard flourished can rarely have lacked a tenant. At Swanage there was built in 1803 a round-house "for the prevention of Wickedness and Vice by the Friends of Religion and Good Order." "No dread Bastille this," says Mr. C. G. Harper, in his book on the Hardy Country, "but an affair resembling a stone toolhouse, 12 feet by 8 feet, and lighted only by the holes in the decaying woodwork of its nail-studded door." Mr. Dennis, we read in "Barnaby Rudge," having been made prisoner late in the evening, was removed to a neighbouring round-house for that night and carried before a justice for examination on the next day; but even a single night in so lowly a place of detention as a round-house must have been a sore trial to the vanity of the common hangman. The round-house

was most commonly in use at the time when prison administration in this country was at its worst and when the lot of prisoners was most wretched; but even the slackest administrators found it necessary to interfere with the habitual sale of gin to his prisoners by the keeper of the round-house.

CHAPTER VI

TURNPIKES

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The Times

A VILLAGE CAGE, LINGFIELD, SURREY

The Times

SPANIARDS ROAD TOLL-HOUSE
AND THE SPANIARDS INN, HAMPSTEAD

CHAPTER VI

TURNPIKES

While, under the urgent inspiration and benevolent supervision of the Ministry of Transport, local authorities, the police, and individuals, road-making and road improvement continue apace, so that old roads lose day by day more and more of the distinctive features that gave them individuality, and new roads have as little definite personality as most new things, the steam-roller and the pick and shovel have spared few relics of the ancient highways and byways of England.

Roads laid down by the Romans—if to call them Roman be to stretch somewhat the meaning of a word—not very broad and uncompromisingly straight, are still in general use, with modern surfaces pressing ever deeper into the soil the original foundations. High roads are coaching roads disguised. Bridlepaths and paths where established rights of way have existed for centuries remain. A pack-horse road even, here and there, survives and vaguely discloses an old transport route, reminding us at the same time of the slowness and difficulty of the movement of merchandise in the past; while a few bridges, called by the same name, show by their proportions how narrow was the track they carried over stream and dyke.

Embellished, hardened, broadened, the old roads carry their modern load of rumbling, speeding traffic ; but their ancient equipment has almost entirely disappeared. In being careful to preserve, in some fortunate cases, the inns where travellers joined the coach, where horses were changed, where journeys were broken and lodgings found, we have generally overlooked the preservation of turnpikes where a halt was called and a toll was paid ; the toll-houses, where road dues were received ; the barriers, gates, and bars of various sorts that had to be passed on journeys long and short. Such obstacles not very long ago were essential features of the English scene, more numerous even than our petrol stations, and rarely so hideous. Where they remain they stand as monuments to an age which was not dominated by time-tables, and to a period when purses were more likely than lives to be lost on the highway. There are still fifty-five toll-roads in England and eighty-eight toll-bridges, and where some of them are to be found we shall presently see. These, though quite recent official figures, are subject to constant revision.

One authority has set it down that toll-gates originated in England in 1267, when a charge of one penny per wagon was levied on carters taking their vehicles through certain specified manors. It was an ingenious way of raising money ; and we are not told that the money was used for the upkeep of the track, such as it was. It was a few years later that a regular toll was levied to raise revenue for road-mending costs, and the road in question

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A MEDIEVAL PACK-HORSE BRIDGE

OVER THE RIVER KENNET AT MOULTON, SUFFOLK

Sydney Pitcher

MALMESBURY MARKET CROSS, WILTSHIRE

was that between St. Giles's and Temple Bar. Money also was gathered in the same way for paying the expense of repairing the highways of Holborn Inn Lane and Martin's Lane, now Aldersgate Street. That was in 1346. The first actual toll-gates or turnpikes seem to have been set up in 1663; and at that time an attempt was made to take in hand some at least of the highways and to make of them something better than the uneven tracks through which long strings of packhorses, grievously laden with all sorts of goods, picked with uncertain steps their slow, laborious way.

Up to late in the sixteenth century the subsidiary roads, mere paths connecting village with village, were impassable in winter, and communities lived through the dead of the year in something approaching isolation. Journeyings were few and infrequent. Visitors from afar were people who had made heroic pilgrimages. Spring was the season of the opening of the road; and proper road construction was so long delayed that the great road-plough, dragged by a team of horses, and used to scour the mud and *débris* of winter from road surfaces, was until recently preserved in one or two English villages. In 1555 the organisation of highways was begun; and it developed on such lines that, when coaching was at its height, and goods, instead of being carried generally on horses, were carried in wagons, there were 20,000 pikemen employed in collecting tolls at 7,800 gates.

But, as Lord Passfield has told us in his exhaustive writings on road administration and local government, the

tolls were practically always mortgaged for the debt that had been incurred in the construction and improvement of the roads. At the time when railway development began each stage coach journeying daily from London to Manchester was contributing over £1,700 a year in turnpike tolls to the different trusts along the route. It was computed that each coach paid something like £7 a year in tolls for each mile of road it traversed—ponderable figures for unwilling contributors to the Road Fund. Moreover, the system of statute labour in connection with road maintenance remained until 1835, though it seems to have given no satisfaction either to highway authorities or to those who were involved in its provisions.

The turnpike trusts appear to have done their work in the most haphazard fashion, and to have chosen for their road surveyors men who, as often as not, had no qualifications whatever for the job ; while statute labour was provided by farmers in the form of gangs of their labourers working on the roads often without supervision. Precisely how much useful work they did—and contemporary historians describe how they loafed, gossiped, and quarrelled—may be left to the imagination. And yet, though slowly, the roads did improve. Up to the beginning of the eighteenth century tolls on the roads had been levied by justices of the peace, but then new statutory bodies, consisting of persons not necessarily or exclusively justices of the peace, were appointed. They were empowered to levy tolls for road maintenance and to fill vacancies by co-option. But the relation between

road improvement and funds collected for it remained vague and uncertain. Many gate receipts hardly paid for the cost of their collection. Tolls, in some cases, were actually farmed out.

By the year 1830 there were in existence 1,100 turnpike trusts having 22,000 miles of relatively good roads under their control. Then came the railways, bringing an inevitable decline in road traffic, so that between 1837 and 1850 the revenue of the trusts actually declined by £500,000, or one-third. Goods traffic then rapidly diminished on the roads, the trusts disappeared, and with them the visible signs of their authority. The last turnpike toll under statutory authority on an English road ended in 1895. What a pitch was reached in the erection of gates is well illustrated in the story of the Rebecca Riots in South Wales a hundred years ago or more. On the roads in that part of the country at that time there were sometimes gates at every 100 yards, exasperating hindrances to movement and checks upon transport. The Welsh arose in their indignation and destroyed them by the score at night. They were re-erected, and again torn down, until authority was compelled to submit to the popular will. And why Rebecca? The explanation is to be found in the 60th verse of the 24th chapter of the Book of Genesis: "And they blessed Rebecca, and said unto her, Thou art our sister, be thou the mother of thousands of millions, and let thy seed possess the gate of those which hate them." The situation and the circumstances were enough to inspire the toll-ridden

peasants vigorously and locally to fulfil the implications of that prophecy after their own fashion.

The toll-gate at Dulwich is still in use, standing on a road that is privately owned running from the Crystal Palace to Camberwell, and the list of charges over against the gate shows revisions making the tariff applicable to modern vehicular transport. Such gates that remain, or stations where tolls are payable, are to be found, like this one, on roads and bridges belonging to individuals or companies. There is one at Lewes belonging to the Southern Railway Company, and another between Arundel and Ford. Two or three are to be found in the Isle of Wight and there is another at Hoddesdon, between Rye House and Stanstead Abbots. There is a toll-bridge at Cookham and another at Culham; and a well-known toll-bridge is at Sandwich over the Stour owned by the corporation.

Lists of charges at toll-bridges and toll-gates, while often they have been brought up to date, like that at Dulwich, so as to include the cost of the passage of motor-coaches and cars, often show also the toll for "a horse, mare, gelding, mule, or other beast drawing any carriage, chariot, chaise, curricle, chair, landau, Berlin, calash, hearse, or other such carriage." There are references, too, to the driving of sheep, pigs, goats, and cattle, to "riding-horses not drawing," and to "vehicles on springs." Another list of such charges makes specification for "every horse or other beast except oxen, two of which shall be considered as one horse, drawing cart or

dray, having the sole or bottom of the fellow of the wheels thereof of the breadth of six inches or upwards."

How great was the number of gates in London and what numerous interruptions were endured by travellers 100 and more years ago in the Metropolis may be deduced from a very interesting collection of turnpike tickets that may be seen at the Guildhall Library. It was made by Mr. John Leighton. And the turnpike gate, too, was a very popular subject with artists, as numberless prints show. In 1827 some twenty-seven toll-gates near London were removed by Act of Parliament; and by 1865 142 others had disappeared. The Brighton-London road was freed of them by 1881, just after the tolls had vanished from bridges over the Thames.

Packhorse roads are not so easily found as the remains or sites of toll-gates. There are one or two in the wild parts of Cornwall, and there is another in Wiltshire. On a bench end at North Tamerton, *C.* 1500, is a charming but little-known carving of a Cornish packhorse.

Eastergate Bridge, a packhorse bridge at Marsden, is scheduled under the scheme for the preservation of ancient buildings. It crosses the headwaters of the River Colne, and carries the old packhorse road from Marsden to Rochdale. The bell carried by the leading horse is preserved locally.

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CHAPTER VII

TITHE BARNS AND MOOT HALLS

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GREAT COXWELL TITHE BARN, BERKSHIRE

Clayton

THE MARKET HOUSE AT ROSS-ON-WYE
HEREFORDSHIRE

CHAPTER VII

TITHE BARNS AND MOOT HALLS

England is rich in buildings of a public or semi-public sort, which are no longer used for the precise purposes for which they were built. These, if much of their ancient glory or importance has departed, yet have a peculiar value in the contribution they make to the general story of the England of another age. Such buildings are tithe barns, moot halls, church houses and market houses.

Tithes and the payment of tithes are matters of ancient and unfailing controversy, and therein we are not concerned to entangle ourselves. We may take it for granted that even the most law-abiding and devout may not always ungrudgingly have paid their tenths in money or in kind; while even a casual study of English history will establish the fact that when the noble and ecclesiastical fingers were ever in the humble pocket, tithes were sometimes collected only after a resort to physical violence. If a parishioner turned his dog upon a priest who had imposed what the parishioner considered too severe a penance, what may he not have done when the tithe appeared in his eyes an intolerable imposition? In the Middle Ages excommunication was in some cases considered the appropriate penalty

for failure to make the payment, but the severity of the punishment does not appear to have diminished in the minds of the people the bitterness with which the exaction was resented and, if the law respecting tithes was generally obeyed, it is very evident that it was obeyed only with reluctance.

And, apart from the general problem of the collection of tithes, and all its numerous and varied implications, there was the very real difficulty that arose when the actual handing over of the due in kind came to be made. It was not until 1836 that Parliament by the Tithe Commutation Act legalised the substitution of payment in cash for payment in kind, though long before then the process had been adopted in great numbers of cases by the mutual consent of the parties concerned. The change, however, brought with it difficulties of its own in the computation of values and so created fresh grounds for controversy and dissatisfaction. For all these reasons, the tithe barn, where the produce of the soil collected under the tithe system was stored, may be regarded as a concrete memorial of one of the most troubled and complex chapters in our social history.

Many fine old barns are still to be seen in the agricultural districts of England, though the work which is done in them is done by machinery, and no longer by hand. The tithe barn, however, no longer shelters the parson's corn and, of the tithe barns which remain, many different uses are made to-day. Some are used for general storage, some have simply been converted

into cart-houses, and one or two at least have been turned into dwellings. Tithe barns are generally very substantially built of stone, brick or wood, or of mixed materials, and often contain much fine timber in frame, roof and main supports. "The tithe barns of an English village," it has been said, "are . . . as admirable and appropriate as the minster at Rheims."

At Wick Farm, Lacock, in Wiltshire, there is a noble tithe barn of stone, and close to it at Abbey Farm there is another of the same material, with a remarkably fine roof. The great tithe barn at Tisbury, though it is thatched, has a definitely ecclesiastical appearance, and its stone walls are reputed to be four feet thick. On the Easton Lodge estate in Essex there is a barn which some years ago was made into a theatre. At least as interesting as these, but in a different way, is the barn at North Lancing, in Sussex, which appears to have been found more or less derelict, and its transformation into a comfortable dwelling was achieved without doing unnecessary violence either to the old material or to the original character of the structure. A bedroom floor was introduced, and a certain number of windows, fireplaces and chimneys were also installed, and from a dark flint and brick building, having a frontage of over 90 feet, a comfortable small house was devised. Another tithe barn near Tonbridge was recently bought privately to be preserved as an historical monument.

Tithing notes, where they can be found, generally contain much valuable information bearing on this

historical subject; but Mr. E. A. B. Barnard in his "Stanton and Snowshill" reproduces a mass of most fascinating material from the Stanton tithe book, which, he reports, is in good condition, and was recently bound and encased at the Public Record Office, before being returned to its place among the Stanton parochial records. In addition to the tithe accounts, the book contains, he says, a number of miscellaneous accounts. The period covered is roughly from 1624 to 1744.

In practically every town in England there is or was a market cross, providing a sort of rallying point for the community. Dr. Abram suggests in his "English Life and Manners in the Later Middle Ages" that such crosses probably owed their importance in early days to the necessity of having some central well-known place from which royal proclamations and civic announcements could be read to the public. As trade increased, a stone or wooden roof was erected round the cross, and acted as a shelter for buyers and sellers. There is such a market cross at Salisbury, and another may be seen at Chichester. The latter was built by Bishop Storey about 1500. The statues which originally filled the niches in it were destroyed by the Roundheads, but a bronze bust of Charles I. remains to decorate one side of the cross.

But, for the merchant, the market house was a much more important centre than the market cross, and a place where bigger and more serious business was done. It was sometimes an individual structure and sometimes

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G.P.A.

ALDEBURGH MOOT HALL, SUFFOLK

Sydney Pitcher

TITHE BARN AND DOVECOTE

HURLEY, BERKSHIRE

simply the lower part of a moot hall. At Peterborough there is a market house built in 1671 which has been used as a town hall, and has lately been restored. At Thaxted, in Essex, the square open market house is the ground floor of the Guildhall, a building of the latter half of the fifteenth century, and one of the few remaining medieval guildhalls. This building, which has been restored, is extremely picturesque. The upper floors, which are reached by a staircase at the back, are now divided into rooms which are used as a club and reading room. The court house at Barking (1567) is built over an open market house, and another interesting market house is at Ross-on-Wye.

In the Middle Ages and later, when cities and towns, though within the realm, had something of the character and independence of little, self-contained states, making local laws and administering justice in their own ways, such places as moot halls, where public affairs were discussed and difficult legal points were thrashed out, stood in more serious relation to the life of the communities about them than they do to-day. The most celebrated moot hall in England is probably that at Aldeburgh, in Suffolk, the birthplace of the poet Crabbe. The town was incorporated by a charter of Edward VI., and for years was a centre of some commercial importance. So severe has coast erosion in East Anglia been that this moot hall, which was once in the midst of a busy business area, is now on the very margin of the sea.

A picturesque market hall is at Chipping Campden,

and nearer London there is one at High Wycombe. A timbered moot hall is to be seen at Elstow, in Bedfordshire. The moot hall at Steeple Bumpstead is a school-house. This is a building of two storeys constructed of timber, plaster and brick. The school was founded in 1592, and the building was altered in the eighteenth century. The Tudor royal arms are displayed on a shield held by a lion on the roof. A full account of this building, and of that at Thaxted, will be found in the sumptuous " Report of the Royal Commission on Historical Monuments." Therein also is described the moot hall at Maldon, Essex, which is a rectangular brick tower of the fifteenth century, loop-holed in places for defence.

The church house of the fifteenth century was a sort of parish-room, and one of the few church houses remaining in England is at Lincoln. These houses were generally near the church, and were commodious and substantially built. Members of the guilds met and feasted in them, and the church-ales also took place in them. They were, in fact, important centres of social life, and not only were the cooking utensils and table furnishings used at the feasts kept in them, but storage space was also provided for a variety of merchandise, including the goods of itinerant tradesmen. Here also morality plays were sometimes performed, and all sorts of games were played by young people.

A humble but not insignificant building that may still be seen on many farms or in the grounds of some

large country houses is the dove-cote. The peculiarity of this building is that there is little or nothing in its design to suggest the purpose for which it was or is used. Many dove-cotes are round and, with their conical roofs, might at first be mistaken for casts from which the cowls have been removed. Others are taller, and constructed simply as plain towers. Pigeons at one time were eaten in far greater quantities than they are now, and, their fecundity being remarkable, supplies of young birds were plentiful. Many of these dove-cotes are to be seen in the West of England, and nearer London there is a prominent one near Sundridge, in Kent, and another stands close to a magnificent barn at Hurley-on-Thames. The general construction of the cote is very simple. The low round or rectangular tower of stone or brick is generally plain on the outside, and the pointed roof is surmounted by a small cupola, through the openings in which the birds go in and out of the dovecote. The nesting boxes are provided simply by leaving numerous niches in the internal masonry.

CHAPTER VIII

TELLING THE TIME

CHAPTER VIII

TELLING THE TIME

MAN has wisely taken stock of his enemies ever since he had any; and he has measured the assault upon his life of his greatest enemy with increasing interest and increasing accuracy. Ever since the morning and the evening were the sixth day the passing of time has been appreciated. Its passage has been observed in seasons, months and days; in watches and in hours; in minutes and in split seconds. The varying heat of the sun, the phases of the moon, the positions of the stars have been eagerly watched; the manifestations of nature in tree and soil have been observed, and all with the same object in view, and not less accurately, nor passionately even, in England than elsewhere.

"Behold," it is written in the Book of Isaiah, "I will bring again the shadow of the degrees, which is gone down in the sun dial of Ahaz, ten degrees backward. So the sun returned ten degrees, by which degrees it was gone down." The day of that miracle of putting back time is generally given as 713 B.C. That helps us to appreciate the antiquity of the sundial—it is written in two words in the Authorised Version—an instrument that was still the standard device in our own land for measuring time long after the Norman Conquest. To

few relics of the past does romance more closely cling. The sundial in the English garden, in the market place, on the church wall, surviving through the centuries, outlived the eyes that, generation by generation, gazed on it in hope, anxiety or fear. It was a favourite trysting place of lovers, a silent witness of vows, of quarrels, of reconciliations. It lent itself generously to the ingenious craftsman and the composer of epigrams, the one to devise its plate or pedestal, the other to fashion its motto. It recorded, as one favourite sundial motto has it, only the sunny hours. And this most singular fact is also to be observed, that while little effort has been made to revive many other old and picturesque appliances, old sundials are often renovated to-day, and new ones are made; so that the sundial survives triumphantly where its contemporaries of a thousand years ago in machines of various sorts have wholly vanished.

Despite its antiquity—and it was known in Babylon centuries before Isaiah wrote, and in England from Anglo-Saxon times—the sundial is not a simple device. The man who would make and site it accurately must have some knowledge of several sciences. There are so many sundials about the country that everybody must be familiar with the various forms the instrument takes, from the vertical dial on the wall to the horizontal one supported on a pillar secured in the ground. A famous one is in the front quadrangle at Corpus Christi College, Oxford. This is a cylindrical sundial, and was erected by Charles Turnbull, a fellow of the college. It displays

the arms of Bishops Foxe and Oldham, Henry VII., and the University. Its dates are 1581 and 1605, the first being probably that of the year when it was set up, and the second that of the year when some ornamentation was added to it.

A dial of another sort, which Dom Ethelbert Horne has discussed in a fascinating little book bearing its name, was the scratch-dial. "Although many of the details connected with this subject must necessarily be conjectural, for lapse of time alone has made certainty impossible," he writes, "yet the main purpose for which these scratch-dials were constructed stands revealed with great clearness when a sufficient number of them are examined. Their primitive object undoubtedly was to mark the hour for mass." And again, "We find scratch-dials still being made towards the end of the XVth Century, as many a Perpendicular church porch witnesses, where we find these service markers cut upon its walls." I have seen two such dials cut in stones in the fabric of Odiham church.

And there were, and are, sundials for the pocket too—

> "And then he drew a dial from his poke,
> And, looking on it with lack-lustre eye,
> Says very wisely, 'It is ten o'clock. . . .'"

No doubt it was a small portable sundial the Fool drew from his pocket. There was ample opportunity on this occasion for using it, since, as Jacques remarks, the Fool basked in the sun. Whether, however, the Fool

knew how to set and read the dial is another matter, so that we shall never know whether it really was ten o'clock. A common form of the pocket dial was fitted with an aperture in a movable part of the instrument. It was held for reading in such a position that the sunlight, passing through this aperture, illuminated the appropriate hour marked on the dial. The user, of course, required to know what he was about, and to be able to manipulate the dial and the adjustable parts of which the positions might be varied according to the time of year. Another sort was made in the form of the covers of a book united by a cord which, when the instrument was opened, became the style. A compass was supplied to facilitate setting. The pocket sundials made to-day have much in common with these old specimens, and there is no difficulty in obtaining them. Like its successor the pocket watch, the pocket sundial provided the craftsman who specialised in decoration with excellent opportunities for exercising his skill.

A fine sundial lately presented to the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, by Professor C. V. Boys, who constructed it, has the dial in the form of a Greek cross of five equal cubes and one trapezium-shaped support. Similar sundails exist at Exeter, Dorchester and Bath. That at Bath bears the following inscription :—

> "Around this cross the hours are marked, and when 'tis fine
> The time is measured by a moving line ;
> Yet should the sky be clouded mark the loss
> Of hours not ruled by shadow from the Cross."

But if the Fool had no niceness in the reading of time, it was otherwise with Richard II.

> " For now hath time made me his numbering clock
> My thoughts are minutes ; and with sighs they jar
> Their watches on unto mine eyes, the outward watch
> Whereto my finger, like a dial's point,
> Is pointing still, in cleansing them from tears.
> Now Sir, the sound that tells what hour it is
> Are clamorous groans, which strike upon my heart
> Which is the bell ; so sighs and tears and groans
> Show minutes, times and hours ; but my time
> Runs posting on in Bolingbroke's proud joy.
> While I stand fooling here, his Jack o' the clock."

The coming of the clock must have caused a great if gradual change in the social life of England. Its effects will have been felt in matters as widely separated as the keeping of a private engagement and the launching of a military attack. The watching of the heavens gave way to the watching of the dial and the hands. Noon at length became " 12 sharp," and " about the time of the going down of the sun " was translated into a cold and implacable figure. But the clock was a highly developed instrument when Shakespeare wrote. Already there were many private and public clocks, and anxiety about knowing the time comparatively exactly was growing. Watches, perhaps of no great accuracy, were being made in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. They were small enough to be worn, though generally they were not carried in the pocket, but were hung from a cord or chain about the neck.

Early clocks in England were those at Westminster, Canterbury, St. Albans and Dover. The story is that the clock put up in the clock-tower, later destroyed, at Westminster, was provided from money got from the payment of a fine by a Chief Justice. The clock itself, together with some fine bells, was installed in 1288 with the motto "discite justitiam moniti." Henry VIII. is said to have gambled the bells away. For the clock in Canterbury Cathedral thirty pounds is reported to have been paid in 1292; while a clock installed at St. Albans in 1326 was a notable example of the astronomical instrument. The Dover Castle clock of 1348 was exhibited in a going condition in 1876. In 1286 a clock-keeper was in employment at St. Paul's Cathedral; and "Paul's Jacks," figures that struck out the hours on a bell, were added some years later. In 1708 a new clock was supplied to the Cathedral, where one of the bells had hung originally in the Westminster tower.

Still earlier than the clock had been the knotched candle and the hour-glass. The latter was filled with sand or water, and was widely used over a long period. It is to be seen depicted in many old prints illustrating domestic scenes, and was commonly used in churches. At least one preacher is reported not to have been above reversing the glass if the sands were running out before his sermon was finished. The modern counterpart of the hour-glass is found in the kitchen utensil for timing the boiling of eggs; while its wide use and great antiquity

are indicated in familiar figures of speech and the popular representation of Father Time.

And water was not only used in the simple hour-glass. The Greek water-clock, clepsydra, may be older actually than the hour-glass itself. Water, indeed, was used for a great many years to provide the motive power in clocks. It was not until the fourteenth century that weights were used instead of it. The bell was for long the most important part of the primitive instrument. On this the hours were sounded. Dials, furnished with a single hand, were added later, the quarters being read in the spaces between the figures denoting the hours. The clock at Westminster Abbey has to-day but a single hand. Some centuries after the weight had been introduced into clocks it was supplanted by the spring; while the pendulum was a still later improvement, though even in the time of Queen Elizabeth there were a few spring-driven clocks. A curious fact is that clocks were often hung above or below existing sundials, which were not removed.

As the watch readily lent itself to the skill of the engraver and enameller, so did the clock to that of the mechanican. Clockmakers were not long satisfied with an instrument that merely sounded the hours on a bell or moved hands round a dial. They made it perform its office through a variety of elaborate and intricate processes. Richard II. described himself as a "Jack o' the clock." This puppet was a popular and common characteristic of public clocks for many years. The

pair of jacks at St. Paul's no doubt provided, as they hammered out the hours, great entertainment for the crowds on Ludgate Hill, and in our own day thousands have watched the jacks (lately transported to the United States) marking the time above a watchmaker's in Cheapside. Clocks were devised—and it must be remembered that for centuries they were among the few mechanical appliances in use—in which the movements of the solar system were reproduced; in which, at the sounding of the hour, miniature knights in armour engaged in combat, trumpets were sounded, and iron monarchs, painted and gilded, saluted the spectator. Our modern ingenuity expresses itself differently. We like Big Ben to be heard in Sydney, and nervous people in Princes Street, Edinburgh, to be startled by a sudden gun-shot.

There is a clock with jacks at York Cathedral, made in, or before, the reign of Edward IV. Originally the jacks only were inside the building, but, many years ago, the dial, which had been outside, was brought in also. A clock more elaborate and generally remarkable is at Exeter. This was a gift to the Cathedral from Bishop Courtney. The dial is near the chantry of William Sylke; but the working parts, which in the past at various times were repaired and added to, are no longer connected with it, though they are still to be seen in working order in the Cathedral. The movement by which the astronomical dial system and the bells are controlled was installed in 1885. But Exeter is particularly rich in ancient and interesting clocks. There

is one dated 1340 at the church of St. Mary Ottery, and one with jacks at St. Mary Steps. Peterborough Cathedral clock has mechanism to reproduce the phases of the moon. Other notable clocks are at Wimborne Minster and Wells Cathedral. The astronomical dial of the famous Hampton Court Clock is also well worth studying.

In 1658, says Mr. Milham in his elaborate work "Time and Timekeepers," the householder's clock was the brass lantern type. To-day it is a familiar object in the windows of most dealers in antiques, and is very frequently reproduced. It would be difficult to find a metal clock of more pleasing design. The grandfather clock developed simply from the desire to conceal the weights of clocks, hitherto supported on wall-brackets. The introduction of the mainspring in 1500 gave a fresh impetus to clock-designing and clock-making, and a sufficient number of old clocks has survived to show us that at one time the clock face, and so one may think the recording of time, was apparently the least important thing about a timepiece.

There are so many old watches to be seen in museums and shop windows, that it seems almost superfluous to describe how they were chased, enamelled and engraved; but however great the charm of the cases, the owners of them probably had a very poor idea of the actual time. Among the watches at the British Museum are two that are said to have belonged to Cromwell. Near to them is displayed Milton's watch, made by Bunting, of Pope's

Head Alley. Mary Queen of Scots had a watch in the form of a human skull; while the Stuart and Regency dandies delighted in watches of the most bizarre and ornate design.

But so profoundly does time dominate our lives, so conscious are we of its mastery of us, so does it check and qualify and limit the most intimate trivialities of individual lives and the most majestic programmes of nations, that we are persuaded to invest the meanest and most inaccurate clock with a more definite personality than we can allow exists in any other piece of mechanism. We are prone to forget that it is we who wind it; and that if the tale it tells is sinister it is we who have put the words into its mouth. Nothing in a room can make it more dismal than can a stopped clock, perhaps because our minds are irked in pondering that not for us is the miracle of the sundial of Ahaz repeated; and that whatever the hands of the clock may do time itself goes ever posting on. In a hundred ways its footsteps have been watched and counted; and when, perhaps laboriously, we reckon the hour from a sundial or, more readily, from an ancient clock, we may tell ourselves that by just such an instrument was King Charles's executioner warned of his immediate duty, was Shakespeare prompted to set out for the Globe. And it is the British clock-tower bells that bind us yet, by a charm of eleven syllables, as urgent and spiritual as the Angelus, to those who have no more to do with time.

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A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY SUNDIAL

AT CORPUS CHRISTI COLLEGE, OXFORD

Shapland

A FOURTEENTH-CENTURY CLOCK

EXETER CATHEDRAL

CHAPTER IX

PUNISHMENTS

CHAPTER IX

PUNISHMENTS

While the main purpose of this book is concerned with the more pleasant things which, in the past, have made their several contributions to the English scene, there are certain unpleasant but still interesting things remaining side by side with them that must not be neglected. Our examination would be incomplete without some reference to them. They are relics of vanished methods of punishment, but it will not be desirable to dwell over deeply on the precise effect that such instruments had upon those they were used to punish, nor to attempt to draw an exact picture of the processes through which they operated.

"Pillory" is a good example of a word that has lost its special meaning with the process of time and has still remained in common use. The pillory is no longer used by magistrates, but we still speak of the victims of public or private criticism as being "pilloried," or "in the pillory." Meanwhile we may observe that in so far as criticism may reasonably be called punishment, it is the only form of punishment that is administered to-day in public. Correction, legally administered, is imparted in private. There are a few centres where gangs of convicts may be seen working in the open, but

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such places are remote from towns, and the general application of punishment to-day is a hidden process. A judge may rebuke a prisoner when passing sentence upon him; but the rebuke is not part of the sentence. An official commission or committee of inquiry may censure the conduct of a public body or of an individual; but the objects of such criticisms are not accused persons answering a charge.

The attitude of the law and of the public, then, in the matter of crime and punishment, has undergone this great change, that whereas publicity itself was once a definite part of the punishment of convicted persons, to-day every effort is made to shield prisoners from it. Executions are no longer carried out in public; and it is even with difficulty that a prisoner may be seen in the prison van, or entering or leaving it. Prisoners are kept from view partly no doubt to prevent possible attempts at rescue or escape, but also partly on humane grounds. We have learned to spare the feelings of the guilty.

But the wretched men and women carted for execution to Tyburn were seen by all London. To-day the last place where a photographer may be seen is the execution shed. Even in the United States, where the camera is allowed even greater liberty than here, the photographing recently of a woman in the electric chair was regarded by the man who took the picture as a rare feat.

So frequent and so public was punishment in various

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G.P.A.

A DUCKING-STOOL JIB

ON THE TOWN HALL AT FORDWICH, KENT

Sydney Pitcher

WHIPPING-POST AND STOCKS

FORTHAMPTON, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

forms in England at one time that stocks and pillories were to be seen in every town and in almost every village. That was in an age when minor crimes were far commoner than now, when the general idea of self-discipline was still but ill-developed, and extreme poverty was commoner and more widespread. If we look at a set of stocks or at a pillory to-day, and note the holes for limbs or neck, worn smooth with use, and ponder what wretches ached there, and what naughtiness brought them punishment so ignominious, we may reflect at the same time that the brutality of these methods of correction was not more brutal than the manners of the age. If surgeons worked on their patients without anæsthetics, what were a few hours in the stocks? How difficult it was to control the lawless, the mischievous and violent is shown in the appeal made by the Commons to Edward III. for stocks to be set up in every village. The appeal was granted. The use of the stocks began to die out in the early part of the nineteenth century; but it is recorded that they were used at Rugby as recently as 1865.

Between the uses of the pillory and of the stocks some difference existed. In his "History of the Police in England" Melville points out that the duty of the constable, legally defined, was to hand over his prisoner to the sheriff immediately upon arrest. It generally happened, however, that prisoners did not appear before the sheriff until after conviction. Something is said in an earlier chapter about round-houses and

lock-ups, and it may be noted that, in the absence of these places of detention, it seems to have been the practice of the constable, at least in the fifteenth century, to secure his prisoner in the stocks pending his appearance before a magistrate. Comparatively soon, however, the stocks became an actual instrument of punishment for persons guilty of petty offences, and the constable often on his own authority detained the unruly in them.

Modern humorous pictures have made the stocks and the method of using them familiar enough to most of us. But there are many actual examples of stocks still to be seen in England. One set is at Horsham, while at South Harting, in Sussex, there are stocks and a whipping-post. At Odiham, a Hampshire village still hardly spoiled by modern building, there are also both stocks and whipping-post. These stand against the churchyard wall, and fairly recently they were roofed over and surrounded by protective wire netting. The stocks accommodated two prisoners, and the iron loops on the whipping-post, in which the wrists of defaulters were retained while punishment was given, are at different heights from the ground.

Men and women detained in the stocks were subjected to every kind of indignity. They must have suffered much in winter from exposure and in summer from heat and thirst. They were the hapless targets of missile and epithet, yet literally held by the leg and unable to retaliate. With what philosophy they may

have comforted themselves, Shakespeare, who must have seen them often enough, suggests

> " . . . . . like silly beggars
> Who sitting in the stocks refuge their shame,
> That many have and others must sit there ;
> And in this thought they find a kind of ease
> Bearing their own misfortunes on the back
> Of such as have before endured the like."

However, Caldecott fifty years ago, in one of his exquisite illustrations to Goldsmith's " An Elegy on the Death of a Mad Dog," shows us the godly citizen of Islington taking an excellent cold luncheon to a girl and a man in the stocks. The text warrants no such incident, but it is none the less pleasant to think that Caldecott's supposition was right in general terms, and that this was the sort of thing a humane citizen—" A kind and gentle heart he had, To comfort friends and foes "—would have done. The last stocks in London, according to Mr. G. C. Williamson, were removed from Portugal Street in 1826.

But the stocks must have been almost comfortable in comparison with the pillory. The constable was not permitted to inflict the punishment of pillory, which at one time was generally used to teach a sharp lesson to persons who had been guilty of an offence against society rather than against the legal code. The profiteer, the dealer in short weight, the food adulterer seem to have been with us always, and when the pillory was most commonly in use its tenants were generally such

evil-doers as these. The suffering public thus had ample opportunities of avenging itself upon dishonest tradesmen, by whom it had been defrauded. Such culprits, in addition to enduring the cramping pains of the pillory, were also often compelled to expiate their crimes by means suited to particular cases. They might be forced to eat a quantity of bad food or drink deeply of watered liquor. One can imagine the shrieks of derision, the jeers and the abuse, that they must have been compelled to listen to during such processes.

The pillory was formed of a frame of wood raised on a broad platform. On the platform and behind this frame the prisoner stood, with head and hands extended through holes in the latter in which they were made fast. Frame and platform were supported at some height from the ground on a stout post or posts. "Stretch-neck" was a suggestive alternative name for the pillory, which was constructed so that those detained in it were at no risk of bodily injury from the instrument. Prisoners in the pillory offered an even better target than those in the stocks, and missiles of all sorts fell upon them in showers. Sometimes they were shaved as part of their punishment, and women prisoners did not escape losing their hair. "Mounting the rostrum" was current slang for undergoing punishment in the pillory, where the period of detention was sometimes only an hour, but generally much longer. Details of the minor physical mutilations which prisoners sometimes suffered in the pillory need not here be discussed.

Another type of pillory was so made that two prisoners might be retained in it side by side, by a pair of frames (for heads and hands), that could be rotated about the central supporting post. Thus the prisoners, though not able to escape, could walk in a very restricted circle, upon the platform on which the machine was set. An old print, reproduced in *The Times* book, "The City of London," shows such a pillory. It has but a single prisoner, Christopher Atkinson, M.P., who was convicted of perjury in connection with a victualling contract. The pillory was in Mark Lane, opposite the Corn Market, and the punishment of Atkinson took place in 1783.

In the thirteenth century the Statute of Pillory established the instrument as one to be used for punishment in cases of small offences, while in the seventeenth century it was used to punish persons who were guilty of publishing books without a licence, or of libelling the Government. In 1816 the pillory was employed only in cases of perjury or insubordination. It is recorded that the last person who was sentenced to the pillory in London was one Bossy, a perjurer. The instrument was finally abolished from use in 1837. Daniel Defoe was among the more illustrious people who suffered in it, but in his day political pamphleteers were liable to harsh treatment, if they happened to be on the wrong side.

The punishment of women in even comparatively recent years was rough and often barbarous. In an age when they were idolised if they were beautiful, as

they have hardly been idolised since, they were corrected, if they were naughty, with astonishing brutality. Special instruments were devised for the punishment of women. The ducking-stool and the scold's bridle were among them. The scold's bridle at Stratford-on-Avon is dated 1633. Herrick and Suckling were then still young men, and Lovelace was probably writing some of his earlier verses.

The ducking-stool was first commonly used at the beginning of the seventeenth century. The chair was of solid timber, and was equipped with iron bands by which the prisoner was secured after she had been forced into the seat. Sometimes it was mounted on wheels, so that it could be pushed into the water and the prisoner immersed. Or the chair was fitted to a hinged beam, set up on the bank of a pond or stream, the whole forming a contrivance very like a see-saw with a single seat, and that over the water. By the up-and-down movement of the beam the prisoner in the chair was alternately plunged into the water and heaved out from it, her sentence fixing the number of duckings she was to receive. Supposed witches, women commonly classed as scolds and women of loose character were so punished. Like prisoners in the stocks and the pillory, the publicity in which the duckings took place was a substantial part of the punishment.

An earlier but similar instrument was the cucking-stool. In this culprits of both sexes were displayed bare-headed and bare-footed at their own doors, or were

hauled through the streets. It was rated the most satisfactory punishment for dishonest tradesmen at one time. Another type of ducking-stool on wheels was fitted with poles, so that it might be pushed far into the water and there overturned, prisoner and all. The scold's bridle was simply a mask of iron strips, often with a spiked iron gag, which effectively silenced unruly tongues.

Another terrifying instrument of punishment was the cage. This is not to be confounded with that other cage which was simply a place of confinement or detention, sometimes called a " clink " house. The cage proper was a sort of large wooden crate, round in shape and fitted with a pivot on which it was rotated at high speed. The prisoner punished in this machine must have suffered great distress. A lively description of the use of a cage occurs in an anonymous diary kept during the siege of Gibraltar, and contributed by the Hon. Sir John Fortescue to *The Times* in 1929. Therein it is described how " a poor lady by name Chidley was confined to the black hole or dungeon for the space of a night, but next day to make her amends for her lack of company was most formally conducted to a pretty whim or whirligig, in form of a bird-cage for the greater benefit of air. It contained room enough for one person, and though in length it be ten feet, yet it is not as broad as it is long. It is fixed between two swivels so is turned round till it makes the person (if not used very gently) a little giddy and landsick. This office was performed

by two of the private gentlemen of the garrison for the space of an hour in the market-place, being well attended." Elsewhere it is recorded that Mrs. Malone "was committed for proper reasons to the whirligig for two hours; it gave great pleasure to the spectators."

The instruments we have discussed are among those which for longer or shorter periods have been in common use in England for the correction of defaulters, and which may still be seen preserved in different parts of the country. It is not desirable here to enumerate the entire armoury of the executioner through the centuries, the stake, the block, the noose, and so forth, nor to consider the grim equipment of the torturer. Such relics may yet be found, but they do not come within the scope of this volume; while the sinister shadow of the gallows lurks in many a place-name, and Tyburn has a history of its own.

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A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY KENTISH ALMSHOUSE

Sydney Pitcher

A DEVON ALMSHOUSE

MORETON HAMPSTEAD, SEVENTEENTH CENTURY

CHAPTER X

ALMSHOUSES

CHAPTER X

ALMSHOUSES

It was in the reign of Edward VI. that the first organised effort was made to cope with the problem of feeding the hungry, finding shelter for the homeless, and tending the sick, though for centuries the religious houses had dispensed charity at their gates, and even here and there provided special quarters for those needing what would now be called hospital treatment. The rich, as long ago as the thirteenth century, made their regular contributions for the relief of distress; and the Maundy Thursday ceremony of the distribution of alms by the king is still observed with picturesque ritual in Westminster Abbey. James II. was the last king who actually washed the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday, a rite which since his reign has been discarded.

Edward VI. instituted a weekly collection of alms made in every parish for the necessitous or "poor by impotence or by casualty." At the time of the Reformation harsh methods were still used against malingerers and habitual beggars, but, on the other hand, when a charitable gift was accepted in lieu of an inconvenient penance—and the world was at least as naughty then as it is now—the poor could count from time to time on not a few welcome windfalls. The guilds were often

generous to the needy, and extended their charity beyond the limits of their own brotherhoods, and sometimes provided free board and lodging for those who were really deserving. And gradually the idea of civic responsibility developed where only individual effort had existed, so that in the fifteenth century many almshouses had already been built in various parts of the country. No doubt the need for such institutions was emphasised by the dissolution of the monasteries, one of the immediate effects of which was to flood the country with numbers of vagrants who hitherto had been able to rely on the monks for support. Many of these almshouses were, as we may see to-day, exquisitely designed and built; and it is unfortunate that in a later age, when authority decided to provide for the shelter of the indigent, it erected structures so grim and gaunt that to look upon them is to be depressed. But perhaps they are little more dismal than the buildings authority also erected to accommodate itself.

At the time of the Reformation, and before, the problem of dealing with the various classes of sick, needy and unemployed was a comparatively simple one compared with that of providing for the lepers. Biblical history throws a sufficiently high light on the leper to make us realise the utter misery of his lot. In the case of this outcast in England official action seems even in very early days to have been laudably definite and determined. Special provision was made for his accommodation, and alms were regularly collected for his benefit.

Chapels were built in which he might worship. Lanfranc, in 1084, founded a hospital for lepers of both sexes at Harbledown, near Canterbury, which was rebuilt in 1674, and later again reconstructed. The Erasmus money box and many other interesting relics are still preserved there. Another lepers' hospital was at Taunton.

It is not possible to give here anything like a full account of English almshouses surviving from ancient days. But to a certain number of them, notable for a variety of reasons, attention may be drawn. At Croydon there is the Whitgift Hospital, which has recently survived determined efforts to pull it down for street widening purposes. This is a quadrangular structure of red brick, built in 1596. On the transom above the central doorway is the motto, "*Qui dat pauperi non indigebit.*" The hospital retains much of its original equipment, but here and there unsuitable patches of restoration are to be seen. The inner courtyard is a place of exquisite quiet in the midst of one of London's noisiest outer environs, and close to England's principal airport. The spaciousness of this retreat contrasts favourably with almshouses of another type, notably those at Bedford, which are simply a row of flat-fronted cottages pressed close together, and having doors that open direct upon the public street.

An almshouse very different from that at Croydon is one that was already famous before Dickens shed new lustre upon it. This is "The Poor Travellers' Rest"

at Rochester. Let it tell its story, or part of it, in its own words, which are inscribed upon a tablet:—

Richard Watts, Esqr.,
by his will dated 22 Aug., 1579
founded this charity
for six poor travellers
who not being rogues or proctors
may receive gratis, for one night,
lodging, entertainment,
and four pence each.

In testimony of his munificence,
in honour of his memory,
and inducement to his example,
Nathl. Hood Esq., the present mayor,
has caused this stone,
Gratefully to be renewed
and inscribed
A.D. 1771.

The almshouse was further renewed in 1865. Dickens's description of the house with its roof of three gables, its staid and venerable air, is sufficiently lively; and if on Christmas Eve the scene within is not always so merry as the one he described, at least the house itself still stands there substantial enough, fronting the main street of Rochester.

It is interesting to speculate in what circumstances six poor travellers might find themselves at Rochester when the charity was established in 1579. As we have seen, road organisation began twenty-four years before that date. But it was a very meagre beginning. Each

parish was made responsible for the repair of the roads within it. The poor travellers may have found in Rochester itself some comparatively decent and occasionally level roads; but the highways they would have followed on their journey to the city would have been miry, broken and full of potholes and pits. No doubt, being poor, they would have been on foot—though the fourpence to be received at Rochester would have been about enough to pay for the hire of a horse for a day—and so, stumbling through the marshy approaches to their destination, clambering over the ruins of broken bridges, and going often in fear of robbers, they must have been profoundly thankful when at last they were able to enjoy the shelter provided by the munificence of "Richard Watts Esqr."

The limitation of the number of persons who may be received into an almshouse in England is a not uncommon feature of charity provided in this way, since funds and space must ever be taken into account where hospitality is dispensed. The house at Rochester finds shelter for six persons; St. John's Hospital, Heytesbury, was founded for twelve poor men and one woman. Fire destroyed it in 1769, three hundred years after it was founded, but it was rebuilt in the architectural style then in vogue and remains to-day a building of great charm, and one that displays such features as are suitable in a place of ease and rest. The Prioratus at Bedford was formerly the almonry of the Priors of Newnham, and as an example of the architecture of the early fifteenth

century is unique. The main walls are intact; the heavily framed oak roof is in position, and sufficient remains of the windows and general features to warrant careful reconstruction. This is practically the only medieval building remaining in the city where Bunyan (1628–1678) lived. It is not surprising that the one noteworthy medieval architectural relic in this place should be a building connected with almsgiving, for almonries and almshouses among old English buildings have weathered storms that have submerged great numbers of ancient structures of other sorts, and the poor have always been with us, and the demand upon our charity never diminishes.

Almshouses of the quadrangular pattern are common in England, but many were built—externally at least—in the form of churches. The design of others, like that at Moreton Hampstead (1639), is embellished with arcading. But almshouses illustrate almost every style of architecture, and have also been devised on almost every conceivable plan. Ford's Hospital at Coventry is a superb relic of the sixteenth century. Among the more imposing almshouses are Saint Cross Hospital at Winchester, and Sherburn Hospital at Durham. These are too well known to require comment or description, and the names of men famous in English history are linked with both of them.

In every city and in almost every small town almshouses of some sort are to be found, buildings of less or greater antiquity and of less or greater architectural

beauty. Some of them, apart entirely from the charitable purpose for which they exist, stand out as dignified examples of English architecture in various periods. But when Englishmen think of an almshouse the picture they generally have in their minds is of a simple structure reproducing the familiar and endearing characteristics of English cottages, set back a little from the road and bright with flowers and lawns. It is remarkable that through centuries when harsh laws and low wages aggravated the miserable lot of the penurious, when manners were rough, when punishments were brutal, and when even sports were often barbarous, the determination somehow to ease the lot of the sick, the indigent and the suffering steadily gathered strength in the minds of all sorts of people in all sorts of places. Those people have left their monuments behind them, and they could not be dealt with adequately even in a single volume. Here it must be sufficient simply to indicate on broad lines how charity has always held a vital and leading place in the English scene, and to draw attention to a few of its more picturesque and notable gestures.

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CHAPTER XI

SPORTS AND PASTIMES

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SPORTS AND PASTIMES

Hazlitt died a century ago, having been much nearer than we to many of the aspects of the English scene discussed and illustrated here. On the whole, he seems to have felt, as readers will remember, that the epithet "Merry England" was justifiable. It is the phrase that enters the mind inevitably first in considering the sports and pastimes of bygone days.

Many of the games that Hazlitt knew, and that the Elizabethans knew before him, are with us yet. Some of them are not played now in precisely the forms with which he and they were familiar, but largely they are the same games. Of those that have vanished the memorials are not too easily found, for there is very little in the impedimenta of sports and pastimes that is of an enduring character. No doubt the three most famous places in the country with which sport is inseparably connected are Plymouth Hoe, Hambledon Cricket Ground, and the tennis court at Hampton Court. But, if you may not set your feet on the very bit of turf where Drake was standing when the Armada came in sight, you may still play bowls on the Hoe. The popularity of cricket is not diminished at Hambledon. And tennis has been played at Hampton Court

for four hundred years. Hazlitt, it will be remembered, writes cheerfully enough of cricket at Old Lord's Cricket Ground, and the great deeds of "Long Robinson"; but there was a time when a cock-fight was a greater attraction than a cricket match. And again, says Hazlitt, speaking of England, "there is no place where trap-ball, fives, prison-base, football, quoits, bowls, are better understood or more successfully practised." Some of these games we still play. Trap-ball and prison-base one seldom hears of; but the others are popular enough, though the football of a century ago was not the organised spectacle of our own day, in which fifty thousand partisans, generally divided in the proportion of about a hundred to one in favour of the home side, watch twenty-two players who are paid a good wage to entertain them.

The Maypole had almost vanished when Hazlitt wrote. In one or two country places it may yet be seen; and at least it gave a name to one church in the City of London. This is St. Andrew Undershaft, in Leadenhall Street. The shaft was the Maypole which was set up at the appropriate season outside the church door and kept, when not in use, under the shadow of the building, being hung from hooks in the façades of houses near-by. But this Maypole became an object of suspicion. First, it was left to languish upon its hooks, following a disastrous May Day riot; and then, having been denounced from the pulpit as an idol, it was destroyed by the very men who so long and so carefully had preserved it. That was in the sixteenth century.

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FORD'S HOSPITAL, COVENTRY

A SIXTEENTH-CENTURY COURTYARD

G.P.A.

AN ELIZABETHAN QUINTAIN

AT OFFHAM IN KENT

At Offham, in Kent, there is preserved on the village green a remarkable and most interesting relic of a sport once very popular in England. This is a quintain, which despite its great age is still in good condition, and has obviously been maintained with the greatest care. The quintain is made in two sections, a stout post, firmly set in the ground, being surmounted by a short beam at right-angles to it in the form of a capital T. This beam turns on a pivot. One end is flattened and the other pointed. The flattened end is perforated in a number of places; and from the pointed end there hung, when the quintain was being used, a bag of sand. The young men who played with this contrivance were mounted and tilted at the broad end of the beam. Skill and swiftness of movement were required to avoid being struck by the bag of sand, which, when the flattened end of the beam was fairly hit with spear or lance, naturally swung sharply round and threatened the head of the mounted striker. Another form of quintain was used on the water. The contestants were then in boats, but the general arrangement of the apparatus itself was much the same as in the case of that used on land.

Cock-fighting had a tremendous vogue in this country for generations. Its appeal was wide because it was a cheap sport, easily organised and easily followed. Cock-fights, illegal though they be, are still organised from time to time in remote places, and the sport, setting aside any question of its possible cruelty, must be exciting enough to watch. There was a royal cock-pit at St.

James's Park—the name remains in the language in the phraseology of the sea and the air—and thousands of people every day enter St. James's Park by Cock-pit Steps. Another celebrated cock-pit was demolished at Westminster in the 1820's. The general arrangement of the cock-pit may be seen at Goodwood, where one is preserved in the grounds. It is a deep circular pit, fashioned in tiers to accommodate the spectators. The " mains " were fought on a raised platform in the centre, and all the onlookers must have been able to see very well what was going on. At Goodwood a large tree is growing on the spot where the platform stood, and the walls of the pit are grass-grown. A special breed of birds was used by the promoters of the fights. The cocks were equipped with sharp steel spurs, and the first really doughty blow that got home was generally sufficient to mark the end of the fight. Gambling on the contests was general, and every grade of society was represented among the onlookers.

" I must have women," insisted Captain Macheath, and it was to Hockley in the Hole that the obliging drawer sent for some of his ladies of the town. Gay no doubt knew his Hockley in the Hole. It was a quarter of London with a reputation none too savoury, and among other attractions it had at one time a bear garden, which became popular after the decline of that named Paris Garden. But bear-baiting was probably at no time an entertainment so generally attended by all classes as cock-fighting—it was too expensive for that. It was

organised originally for the amusement of the Court, and the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries are the period when it was most in vogue. Mastiffs were the dogs used in the sport, which even the hardest-hearted will not deny was one of great cruelty. It was the subject of a great deal of gambling; and if it did not draw such crowds as less spectacular but cheaper entertainments attracted, it was in Queen Elizabeth's day threatening the popularity of archery. From time to time a humanitarian raised his voice against it; and the Puritans actively assailed it. It declined for a period, to reappear during the Restoration. Pepys was not above visiting a bear garden or taking his wife with him; but once royal patronage no longer supported it, bear-baiting, which was sometimes varied by lion-baiting, gradually gave place to other amusements, though it was not until 1835 that it was actually made illegal, along with bull-baiting.

The one mitigating fact about the general practice of bull-baiting was that it was believed to make the beef tender. Indeed in some places it was compulsory to bait a bull before it was killed for food; and cases are on record in which butchers were punished for killing bulls "unbaited" and offering their flesh for sale. Upon a recital of the details of bull-baiting it is hardly desirable to insist. At Stamford and Tutbury there were elaborate entertainments, of which such baiting was the centre. In these, as in other forms of the sport, the chances were always heavily against the

wretched victim, as they were in badger-baiting. But it is satisfactory to reflect that the badger sometimes laid about him with good effect before he was destroyed; while it is difficult to feel much sympathy with the eight spectators at Paris Garden who were killed when a stand from which they were watching the entertainment collapsed. A bull-ring may still be seen at Horsham not far from the stocks mentioned in another chapter of this book.

Pall Mall—the street is the game's memorial, and the implements are in the British Museum—was a sort of golf played with a mallet down a skittle alley. Not far from Hammersmith there is a skittle alley in the garden of a tavern close by the Thames, for which it is claimed that it is the only open-air alley in London, if not in England. Volumes have been written of the history and antiquity of golf; but in this country at least one of the most interesting relics is the figure of a golfer in the great east window of Gloucester Cathedral. Another remarkable pictorial relic is the sixteenth century painting, preserved in the pavilion at Lord's cricket ground, where several games are represented.

But while all forms of hunting were followed, together with such definitely cruel sports as some of those that have already been noted, there were many other pastimes of a robust and vigorous character which were more or less definitely allied to military exercises. The arms and the armour worn in jousting and tourneys may still be seen in the Tower of London. Archery was a

sport demanding the greatest skill; and the maxim "learn to shoot straight and obey orders" had its counterpart in the days before firearms in the organisation of archery contests, and the training in the use of bow and arrow that young men received. Some of them may have been the same young men who took part in the ancient Easter game of football at Workington between the "Downies," or men who worked at sea, and the "Uppies," who worked ashore. For a hundred years the game has been started by a member of the same family, and it is still played with great vigour, with very few rules and with the exchange of many hard knocks. In Helston, in Cornwall, there is the Floral or Flora dance, which is essentially a pastime, and a survival of that country dancing which once was so generally popular in England.

The Puritans, who set their faces definitely against blood sports, interfered so far as they were able with various rural festivities of an entirely harmless nature as well. "Church ales," organised to benefit guild funds, Maying and play-acting they strongly and sternly discountenanced. But Hock-tide celebrations, the observance of Plough Monday, the rejoicings at the end of harvest, the countless fairs with side-shows of all sorts continued. Such simple amusements have died out, and a variety of reasons may be found to explain the fact. Transport is no doubt the most important of them. So long as people rarely left their villages, so long were they compelled to provide their own enter-

tainment. But once it became possible to move from place to place with comparative comfort, so did it become worth while organising such entertainments as might draw a multitude. "Transportation is civilisation"—it also means sophistication for the already civilised; and the simple entertainments in England began to wane when people began to grow self-conscious and restless. We have seen that many of the sports of the English people even 150 years ago were little more than organised exhibitions of brutality; but it is good to reflect that their interest was quickened not only by such displays as these. They were moved by demonstrations of skill, by colour and music and pageantry, and better still, they were willing to endure great physical hardship themselves, and to risk their limbs, and even often their lives, in contests as rough and rugged as many aspects of the age in which they lived.

CHAPTER XII

APPLES AND HOPS

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APPLES AND HOPS

Cider is an admirable and heartening drink; and it has been made in England and other countries of temperate climate for centuries. But it has known many vicissitudes. From being in general use generations ago, when its popularity was comparable almost with that of beer to-day, it passed into comparative obscurity and was drunk by few who were not country folk. In more recent times, when, attractively bottled, it was again widely offered for sale, it regained the favour it had lost; and now it is bought and drunk in places where hitherto it had been rarely seen. But the cider that comes sparkling from the bottle, excellent beverage though it be, is not quite the cider of the ploughman and shepherd. That, if a rougher drink, is yet the true rustic liquor, redolent of summer orchards, full, masculine and authoritative for masculine palates that appreciate its tang and masculine lips that sup it from the earthenware mug.

Cider, furthermore, is also a drink more definitely reminiscent of the countryside than beer, another essentially English brew. For while there is nothing to choose between an orchard and a field of barley as

established characteristics of our countryside, the processes of the brewery are darker and more intricate than those of the cider-press. Cider, one feels, may be more readily associated with the fruit from which it is made, than beer with the grain from which it is brewed. And while fields of standing barley and ripening hop gardens may be familiar sights enough, there are few of us, probably, who really know very much about malt. But apples are our intimately familiar fruit. Beer is an excellent beverage, but cider has the country savour.

The development in England of large cider manufactories has left little room for the simple, old-fashioned press and mill. But a few of these may still be seen in country places, survivors of a time when scores of them were worked under the shadow of the very boughs from which the fruit they crushed was gathered. And what fruit, how exquisitely named!—Royal Wilding, Fox-whelp, Handsome Mandy, Yellow Styre; somebody should write a poem about them. All over the west of England the cider apples grew and grow, in Herefordshire, Somerset, Devon, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire. And there almost every farmer had some sort of cider-press in the old days.

Such an old press and mill may yet be seen at Manor Farm, Stanton, in Gloucestershire. Its antiquity is beyond question, and the oldest inhabitants will tell you that it stood where it stands to-day long before their fathers' time. Stanton is one of the most beautiful villages in the Cotswolds, and, thanks to the taste and

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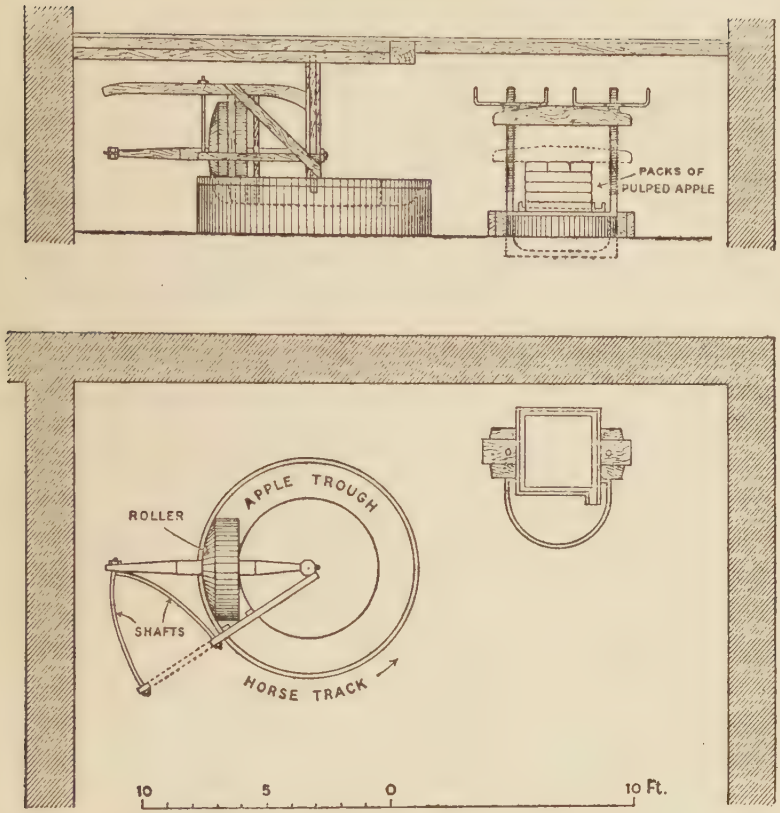
OAST HOUSES IN KENT

Sydney Pitcher

A COTSWOLD CIDER-MILL AND PRESS
AT MANOR FARM, STANTON
By courtesy of Sir Philip Stott, Bart.



CIDER MILL AND PRESS AT MANOR FARM, STANTON.
ELEVATION AND PLAN.

liberality of Sir Philip Stott, it retains unimpaired its traditional architectural features. The mill at Stanton is of a pattern once very popular. The base of it is nine feet in diameter, and is made of hard stone. In this there is cut a deep circular groove or trough, about

eighteen inches wide and a foot deep, in which the apples are crushed by a heavy stone roller. In the centre of the mill there is an octagonal shaft which carries a horizontal beam on which the roller is firmly wedged. At the extremity of the beam there are a pair of shafts of iron to receive the horse which, driven round and round the base of the mill, drags the roller through the trough. At the outer end of the beam there is a bearing arranged in the end of the shafts for it to revolve in, and a corresponding bearing is fitted in the upright shaft, to which also is secured a long bracket. This bracket serves two purposes: by iron hinges it carries the ends of the shafts, and it also supports two upright pieces of timber which project down into the trough and act as scrapers impinging on the sides of it, and forcing the apple pulp into the centre of it and beneath the great stone roller. The bracket and the beam thus act together in revolving the central horizontal shaft.

When the apples have become sufficiently pulped in the mill, they are placed in coarse jute cloths, which are folded over so as to form a sort of parcel the size of the bed of the press. Three or four of these parcels are placed one upon another in the press beneath a heavy slab of timber. A beam is then brought down under pressure, supplied by hand-screws, on to the slab and the final crushing begins. The squeezed-out liquid flows into a trough round the press and thence, through a spout, into a stone cistern from which it is transferred to barrels.

The process sounds laborious enough; but it was attended by merrymaking such as modern methods can hardly be expected to provoke. Bad apple-harvests no doubt there were, when there was little enough to inspire song and laughter; and days tedious and exasperating when the mill worked ill, and hard words were exchanged across the press; for the little industries of an earlier England were not carried on in a fairy-tale world. And yet one might think that the very slowness of the processes made for peace among the men engaged in them. And, seen thus from afar, romance has its way with the work-a-day task even of cider-making; so that the uneager, plodding horse, the giant beams, the ponderous roller, the foaming trough, are touched by the same beauty of enchantment that lingers in the dusty twilight of the barn, and burns in red and yellow on the fruitful branches.

In a memorable chapter in "The Woodlanders" Hardy describes the use of another cider press and mill. He recalls how in Wessex the travelling cider-maker moved from place to place with his apparatus, which was fixed on wheels instead of being set up in a cider-house; and "with a couple of horses, buckets, tubs, strainers, and an assistant or two, he wandered from place to place deriving very satisfactory returns for his trouble." In Wessex, too, there was the "God-forgive-me," a huge cider mug, so-called, says Hardy in "Far from the Madding Crowd,"

"probably because its size makes any given toper feel ashamed of himself when he sees its bottom in drinking it empty."

In August, when the apples are ripening in the West of England, the hops in Kent and Worcestershire are blossoming, and in the late summer and early autumn they will be gathered and then dried in the oasts. Hops in this country have had a curiously diverse history. In the reign of Henry IV. hops were imported from Flanders, and at first they were used for their medicinal properties. But they did not long escape the general desire to experiment with growing things in case it might be possible to decoct a drink from them, and eventually hops were introduced into beer. But not without opposition in high quarters. Henry VIII. actually forbade the use of hops in brewing; and the City of London was so alarmed at the prospect of hops contaminating the popular drink that it led an agitation against the use of them in it. However, little heed was paid either to the King or the City; and the early days of the seventeenth century saw hops being widely cultivated, while the first few plantations had been laid out some fifty years before; and in Queen Elizabeth's reign a large quantity of hops was being used.

Oasts are among the few relics of the past that are still in common use; and at present, at any rate, they are hardly threatened with extinction. The oasts of Kent are as essential a feature of the Kentish landscape

as the orchards. The squat towers of red brick or weather-stained stone, with their odd conical tops, surmounted by wooden cowls, can hardly be kept out of the scene wherever one may look in the county. Less dominating than windmills, less romantic than water-mills, they yet have a certain comfortable and homely personality. The mellow tones of walls and roofs blend pleasingly enough with the background of the tender green of hop-bines in summer, and the more sombre brown and russet of ploughed land when the poles are bare. No doubt the oasts were busier when brewing was done as much for the community as for the multitude ; but their feet are well rooted in the land, and are not yet to be dislodged.

The signs in London of the approach of the hop-picking season in Kent are so generally familiar that it would be superfluous to describe them ; though one may never cease to wonder that the annual movement of pickers from the poorer parts of the Metropolis to the hop-fields continues, and that the number of people taking part in it appears not to diminish. The automatic reaper and binder may make short work of ripened barley, but hops, like apples, are still gathered by hand. The pickers, men, women and children, from slums, suburbs and hamlets, live, during the picking season, in tents, shacks and barns, a diverse community happy in the open air. From time to time at their work or at night round the camp-fire they may still be heard singing lines of an old song, the words of which were reproduced

some forty years ago in "The English Illustrated Magazine":

> "We're going down hopping tomorrow,
> To leave our poor homes and their sorrow,
> And what we can't pick we must borrow.
> Down-by the sweet gardens of Kent
> We went.
>
> "They pay but eight bushels a shilling,
> And bins make a dozen a filling.
> How can us poor folk get a living?
> Down-by the sweet gardens of Kent
> We went."

After the hops have been gathered they are taken to the oasts for drying, the most important process through which they are passed before being marketed. There are a certain number of square oasts, but most of them are built round. They are divided into two chambers, a lower one in which the furnaces are lit, and an upper in which the hops are dried in the hot air passing up from below. The arrangement of the furnaces varies a little in different oasts; but generally it will be found that they are set in the inner faces of a low rectangular structure of brick, one end of which remains open so that the furnace-man may freely enter to tend the fires, which are thus about him on three sides. The back and upper parts of the walls of this structure are built in a sort of honeycomb fashion so that the super-heated air passes quickly and freely into the chamber between the furnaces and the circular wall of the oast. This

part of the oast is roofed across with wooden boards set an inch or so apart, the ceiling forming the floor of the drying chamber. Thereon is spread a cloth of coarse mesh on which the hops are heaped, and as the hot air rises through them they are continually raked over by a workman.

Anthracite and charcoal, with a little brimstone, are used in the furnaces, which, once they have been kindled, are not allowed to go out or even diminish until the drying process is complete. Thus they are burning day and night, while the oast remains impregnated with the heavy reek of hops and the air about the furnaces can scarcely be breathed for its heat and pungency. A vane keeps the cowl in the wind, and the scented air passes out at last into the free atmosphere. After the first lighting the fires give off no smoke, so that the hops escape contamination ; but the furnace man lives laborious days and nights, catching but here and there a few moments of irregular sleep until his task is done. The dry hops are forced into sacks by simple machinery which has taken the place of the feet of the men who used to tread them down.

Sometimes one may find two or three oasts attached to a single oast-house, sometimes only one. The house itself is a barn-like building of stone, brick or timber ; and except during the brief month when the hops are being dried it is generally used for the storage of utensils used in hop-production, feed for cattle and such odd farm implements as one can always find in a

barn that is appointed for no very definite purpose—a broken harrow, a feed cutter, and perhaps a half-empty can or two of sheep dip or lubricating oil. Some very fine timber is to be found in the oldest of these houses; rough-hewn it often is, but weatherproof and impressively sturdy.

In the old days the oast-house was the scene of many a merry party when the hopping was in progress. There the pickers gathered after the day's work to eat and drink and sing. There they ate the hop-pickers' supper and danced on the uneven floor to cornet and fiddle. Some of the stone oast-houses, together with the oast itself, have been made into dwellings, and excellent accommodation may be found in them. A cottage so contrived stands on the summit of Ide Hill. It is perhaps 200 years old. A proper floor has supplanted the old drying floor that divided the oast into upper and lower chambers, making two excellent rooms which are unusual in being round. Lattice windows have been let into the wall, and it has been necessary to reinforce the entire structure with cross-beams of iron, which are hidden in wooden casings. Dampness rising from the soil is a disadvantage that has to be reckoned with, but oast and house together make an attractive and commodious cottage, and a housekeeper with some skill in decoration could spend many an amusing hour in the round rooms.

But while Kent is still generously sprinkled with oasts, and a good living may yet be made by growing

and drying hops, signs of change in the hop-fields are not wanting. We have seen that the picking season is not quite so picturesque as it was, that spontaneous merriment in camp and oast-house grows rarer, marketed amusement, perhaps, having made people less ready to amuse themselves. New sorts of furnaces are being installed in oasts built on somewhat different lines from the old; and in some cases the furnaces are being done away with altogether, the hot air for drying the hops being pumped into the drying chambers by mechanical power. But much of the spirit of earlier days still hangs over the plantations, and it is impossible to stand in an oast-house among the appliances of a craft centuries old and fail to feel the caress of a hand from the past.

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